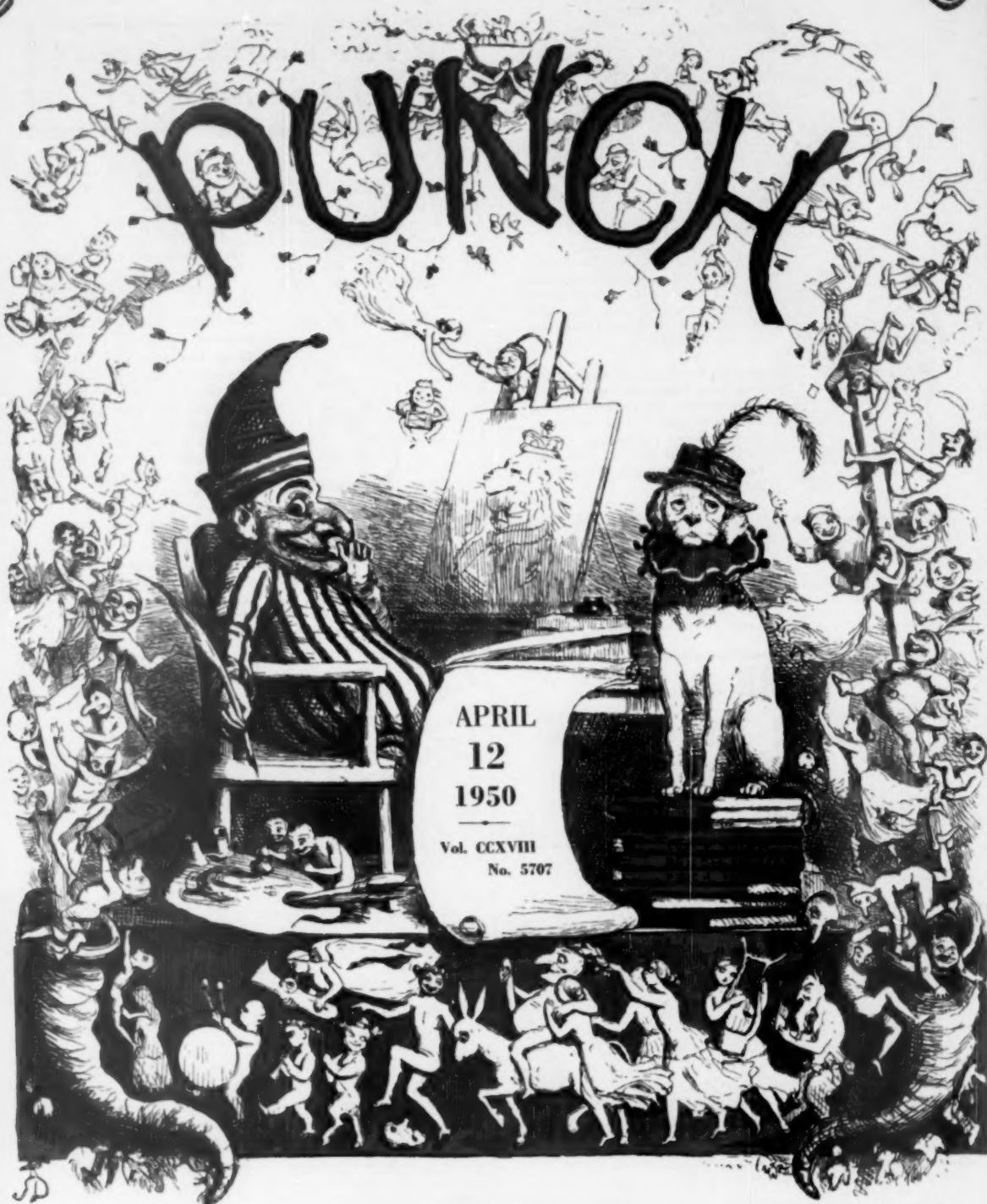


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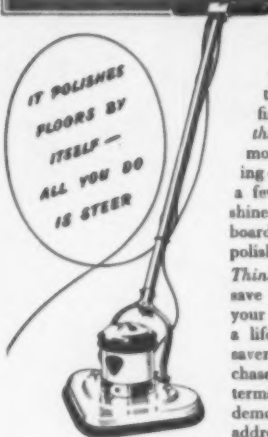


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And some look at Monet—
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But your palate'll say
that gin plus Lillet
is the best taste that
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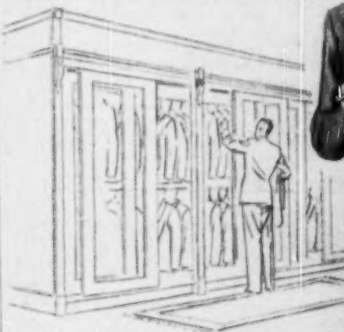
LILLET

The simplest and best cocktail is 2/3
Gin and 1/3 Lillet (with just a dash
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A Hundred £'s of Beef

LATE one afternoon, while lost in Windsor Forest, Henry VIII came upon an Abbey. Disguised by his hunting clothes, he dismounted from his horse and entered.

The old Abbot, unaware that his guest was the King, welcomed him as any traveller—set him before a roaring fire and plied him with plates of beef and tankards of ale. King Henry ate with gusto. He drank with distinction. The Abbot, who had a weak stomach was lost in admiration.

"I would give a hundred pounds" he sighed, "to feed as heartily on beef as you."

Next morning the King left. Two weeks later the Abbot was arrested and taken to the Tower of London. For three days he starved. On the fourth he was served with a huge roast of beef. Hungrily he

attacked the meat. Greedily he devoured it. Whereupon the door to his cell burst open.

"It will cost you one hundred pounds for your freedom" said Henry VIII.

To-day, little remains of that age of hearty hedonism. We can still thrill to the warmth of Mediterranean sunshine or the cool precision of a perfect entrecôte. But what further have we?

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"PERFECTOS FINOS" CIGARETTES

FINO

Music [FOOTPRINTS] An Intelligent Man's Guide to Shoes while you walk?

In certain ways the Ancients got more fun out of walking than we do. One of the happier eccentricities of the Greeks was the wearing of 'musical shoes.' As the wearer strolled rhythmically from one Discussion Circle to the next, he could strum out the latest lyre-theme without driving his friends and relations mad. The Egyptians, on the other hand, found pleasure in painting pictures of their enemies on the soles of their shoes, thereby wreaking a vicarious vengeance.



Musical Shoe

today will put you in a very harmonious state of mind. They, too, have certain unusual under-the-sole features, which help the most athletic feet to keep on their toes. Beautifully made in a variety of fine leathers, Selberites are available in 'multiple' fittings—often as many as five different widths to each half size.

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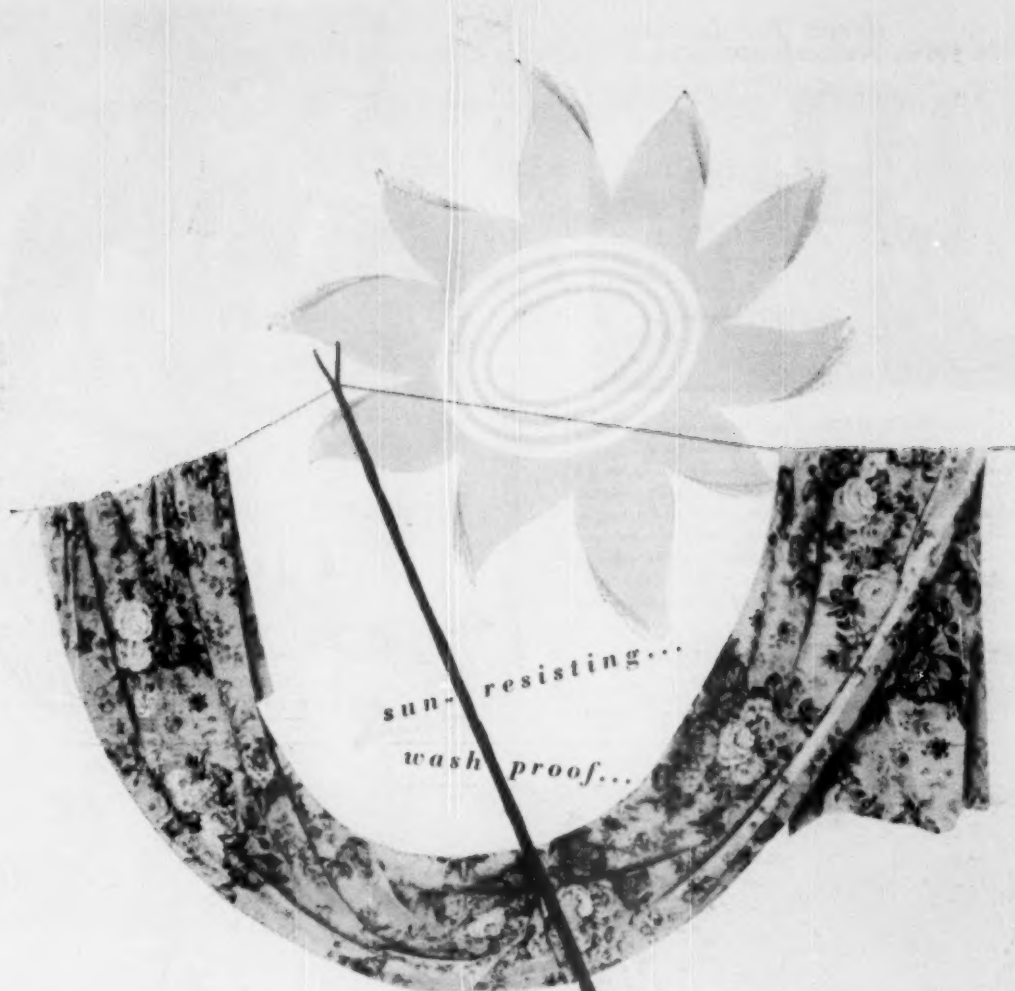
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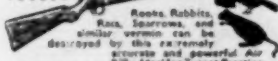
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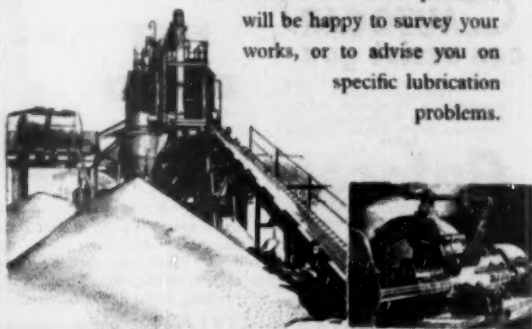
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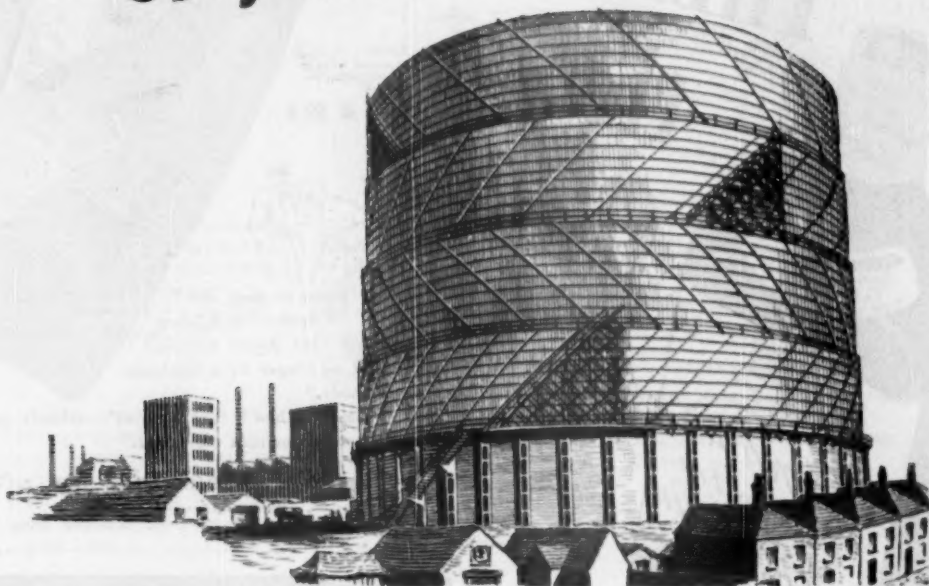
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EVIDENCE was given in a London police court that much pilfering takes place at the hour when warehouses are about to close. And that's why they call it knocking-off time.

"Are present-day conditions changing the British character?" a writer asks. Well, the performance of certain nationalized industries has probably made us less inclined to admire a good loser.



Dr. Anthony Standen, a professor of science at an American university, writes in his new book: "What with scientists who are so deep in science that they cannot see it, and non-scientists who are too overawed to express an opinion, hardly anyone is able to recognize science for what it really is, the great Sacred Cow of our time." Is there a literary-minded veterinary surgeon in the house?

Q

A Suffolk padre points out that before a house can be built by a local council twenty-eight different kinds of approval have first to be obtained. After that everything is quite straightforward—until, of course, they start to build.

Burning Question

"Moons, Myths and Man" (Faber and Faber, 16/-)—a discussion of Hoerbiger's Cosmological Theory and its complications.

Yorkshire paper



2



3

An unusual situation arose at Lincoln where the number of votes cast for the successful candidate, Mr. G. de Freitas (Labour) was the same as the combined total of his two opponents. The figures were: Mr. de Freitas 21,537; Mr. J. W. F. Hill (C. and Nat. L.) 17,784; Miss J. Henderson (L.) 3,753. A further coincidence was that Mr. de Freitas's majority over Mr. Hill was the same as Miss Henderson's poll.—"The Times House of Commons 1950"

You can prove anything with figures.

A writer asks what has become of the old-fashioned tradesmen who gave cigars to customers who paid up promptly. And tradesmen wonder what has become of the old-fashioned customers who paid up promptly.

"The average road in England," says a motoring journal "is nothing to be ashamed of." Nevertheless there are always plenty of people ready to pick holes in it.



4

HOLIDAYS

IN flats and palaces, pre-fabs and basements

The Easter holidays charm magic casements

Which open on to vistas having reference

To our P.A.Y.E. as well as preference:

Alps, chamois, edelweiss, gruyère and glaciers,
 Palms, lidos, Lidos, swimming-slips and brassières,
 Atlantic rollers, surf and seagulls mewing,
 Fried fish-and-chips, felt slippers and no queuing,
 Siestas, bull-rings, castanets and garlic,
 Eisteddfods (look you!), leaks and "Men of Harlech,"
 Hitch-hiking over hill and dale at random
 Or grimly pedalling on push-bikes, tandem,
 Dutch bonnets, windmills, tulip-fields and sabots,
 "Sea View" and hair-nets, modesties and jabots,
 Plus-fours and golf clubs, skating rinks and bruises,
 Excursions, Blossom Tours and Channel Cruises,

Museums, picture-galleries, memorials,
 Fan tracery and architraves and oriels,
 Scoons, bagpipes, bannocks, haggies and tartan
 Or simply time to listen to Dick Barton,
 The Serpentine, The Row, tub-thumpers' speeches,
 Kew Gardens, Epping Forest, Burnham Beeches,
 Hens, horses, haystacks, quack and bleat and cackle,
 Flicks, flannel dances, footballs, fishing tackle,
 Casinos, Gallic gaiety and galas,
 Bogs, brogue and blarney, shamrock and shillelaghs,
 The caravan, the sailing-boat, the glider—
 All this and Devon too, with cream and cider.

And then, the influenza having gripped us,
 We stay in bed, inhaling eucalyptus.

BROWN WANTS HIS MONEY

SOMEONE named Brown has written a rather unmannerly letter asking when he can expect to receive payment for a miserable half-acre of land which the council took from him in 1945. Following routine the thing has been handed to old Gatsby for attention. In every such case his instructions are to adopt delaying tactics until he retires in 1954. Chopleigh will then take over and explain to any applicant who survives that the retirement of the officer dealing with the claim makes it necessary to start the whole thing *de novo*. If, in spite of this, Chopleigh finds after a year or two that a settlement threatens to become inevitable Pinmill will come personally to his assistance.

Old Gatsby, whom forty years' experience has made a master of this kind of thing, played an orthodox opening, gently chiding Brown for his impatience and asking for precise particulars of the size and position of the land, together with plans in triplicate and copies of Brown's birth and marriage certificates. The purpose of this letter is to bring home to the claimant his breach of good taste in having raised the matter at all. At least half of them it finishes off altogether. We felt confident that no more would be heard of Brown.

But we were wrong. Within forty-eight hours a letter had come

in asking what the council had done with the plans in triplicate which it had already received on 15/9/45, 23/7/46, 6/5/47, 3/8/48 and 16/3/49. If the council was going into the wall-papering business why did it not come out into the open and say so.

Old Gatsby's eyes sparkled at finding himself confronted with so worthy an adversary. The next card he played was the War Damage Commission. He said the council could do nothing until the war damage position was clarified. Had a claim been made yet, and if made had it been met? Would Mr. Brown be good enough to drop the commission a line? "Get him tied up with the W.D.C.," said old Gatsby, "and he's lost."

Apparently Brown knew this too, for his reply (received twenty-four hours later) said that the commission had already laid it down that the after-damage value of the land, having regard to the possibility of beneficial user as at the relevant date, on the assumption that the amount of any increase attributable to circumstances other than the effluxion of time is to be disregarded except in the case of hereditaments to which any earlier enactment applies or may be deemed so to apply, shall be considered for all purposes other than those set out in sub-section (1) to be equal to, or,

where subject to encumbrances required by the said Act to be taken into account, not less than, the before-damage value as ascertained, always provided that the total of the several interests in question shall not together be greater than each of those interests taken separately.

"The effect of this ruling," concluded the letter smoothly, "is, of course, self evident."

"Self evident is a masterly touch," said Pinmill, after he had tried vainly to make head or tail of the ruling. "I'm half inclined to think that we ought to pay the chap his money. He writes a very pretty letter."

"And after all it is his land," said Dibdin, quite missing the point as usual.

Old Gatsby would not hear of capitulating. But he was badly rattled, so much so that he played—rather prematurely—his ace: Statutory Rule and Order 2357. This is his favourite S.R. & O. It deals, as a matter of fact, with the control of noxious or injurious effluvia arising from the activities of blood boilers, bone grinders, gut scrapers, fell mongers and chitterling steamers, but it is impossible to prove this, because no one can understand it beyond the third paragraph. In the course of his service in the various departments of the council old



STAFFORD'S HEY

Gatsby has played S.R. & O. 2357 with unfailing success against, among others, a critic of the quality of the soap provided in the council's baths and washhouses, a man who claimed compensation for falling down an unlit hole in the road and a mother who wanted a teacher dismissed for caning her little boy. He played it now against Brown.

From the moment Brown's reply was received, pointing out that of course he was perfectly familiar with Statutory Rule and Order 2357, but that clearly it was not applicable to the present case by virtue of subparagraph (7)(iii)(a) (which, so far as any of us can see, deals solely with the breeding of maggots from putrescible animal matter), old Gatsby was a broken man. To have S.R. & O. 2357 turned against him was like the defection of an old and trusted friend. He made a final

half-hearted attempt by suggesting that Brown should seek professional advice. A professional adviser can be relied upon to turn the most straightforward case into a mass of complexity, and old Gatsby cunningly baited the trap by pointing out that the council would of course pay for these services. But Brown replied that he would be quite content if the council would pay him for his land, and old Gatsby was left without a card in his hand.

I deeply regret to say that he has taken the coward's way out. Mrs. Gatsby phoned this morning to say that he is sick and won't be able to come to the office for some time. A medical certificate is following. We presume it will tell of a nervous breakdown and the necessity for a prolonged rest.

YOU CAN HAVE A TONGUE LIKE MINE IN THREE DAYS

I FORGET in which of the Ellery Queen stories it is that the detective solves the entire mystery by an all-night solitary session of pure deductive reasoning. I remember, however (obviously I must remember *something* about it, or there would be little point in dragging it in as an illustration), that Ellery's preparations for this nocturnal brainstorm consisted in loosening his tie, undoing the top button of his shirt and arranging twenty cigarettes in a neat row on his desk. By morning the cigarettes had gone and the problem was solved.

In spite of a deep-rooted inner prompting which told me that there was a flaw in my reasoning somewhere, I pursued for many years a modified version of the Queen plan whenever any unusual mental exertion was required. It had to be modified, of course, according to the attendant circumstances. An after-dinner speech may be composed while eating the dinner, but not if one begins by dismantling the bow-tie and wrenching out the collar-stud: the reactions of fellow-diners are too distracting. Nor is it easy to come by the brand of cigarettes patronized by Mr. Queen; and for a long time I laid the blame for my sluggish intellectual processes at the door of various respectable manufacturers of the Virginian variety. That last sentence is perhaps a trifle ambiguous, but only a person who had stupefied himself over a long period by the excessive use of Turkish tobacco, hemp or other deleterious substitutes would fail to grasp its meaning.

It was shortly after Arnold Bennett, with his devastatingly capable character from the Five Towns who rolled his own, had started me spreading a trail of crumpled cigarette papers and dropped tobacco in the houses of friend and foe alike that the first major complication arose. Up to then my faith in cigarettes, though losing some of its first ardour, had never been shaken;



but now I read in a shop-window that a pipe-smoker was usually a man of sound judgment. Looking back from an enlarged experience I am now inclined to believe that the fact that this shop sold pipes was something more than a coincidence. Be that as it may, there was plenty of support for the theory. I thought at once of Sherlock Holmes with his blackened briar and his pound (he always bought it by the pound: an ounce was no good to a man like Holmes) of strong shag tobacco; of Barrie and the Arcadia Mixture; of Richard Hannay smoking a couple of pipes before falling asleep in the heather to wake at dawn as fresh as a lark and ready to cope with any number of bald-headed archaeologists, let them hood their eyes in never so birdlike a manner. I bought a pipe.

It is a curious thing that whatever of my possessions I may lose I have never been able to lose a pipe. I cannot account for this. Propelling pencils, especially if made of precious metal, flow through my hands like water through a sieve; telephone numbers have only to be jotted down in my diary for the diary to disappear; silk handkerchiefs, golf-balls, identity cards, suitcases—into the night go one and all. I do not wish to appear boastful, but during the war I lost a torpedo. But all the pipes I ever owned are still distributed about the house, mostly with their bowls choked with half-smoked dottle. The fact that the only one I can lay my hands on at the moment is the briar (thin, light and smoking hotter than anyone would suppose possible) which I purchased on the strength of that disingenuous advertisement does not prevent the others from turning up, spouting ash like a volcano, when I am trying to find a clean shirt or a sheet of carbon-paper.

Not that I am a confirmed pipe-smoker. At different times, when I have had leisure to give the matter serious thought, I have emulated Major Yeates, who in the intervals of his duties as an Irish Resident Magistrate smoked cigarettes on all



"Is that Daniel?"

possible occasions; Lord Peter Wimsey, who liked a particular brand with his morning cup of Orange Pekoe; Bertram Wooster, who found them soothing in moments of crisis (we never see Jeeves smoking, though—is this significant?) and, when the cost is being borne by another party, a certain contemporary statesman whom I will not name in case it gives offence to those privileged to be called either

his friends or his enemies. I can claim to have made an exhaustive trial of tobacco in all its combustible forms; and the conclusion I have come to is that for assisting concentration, sharpening perception and pointing the judgment they are all pretty much on a par. All the tobacco I have burnt while trying to write this article hasn't even given me an idea for a title.

G. D. R. DAVIES

CLUBS, NOT COSHES

The National Association of
Boys' Clubs

TWO boys I saw in London on the same evening summed up pretty well the difficulties and the achievement of the clubs movement.

The first was sitting in the canteen of a mixed club beside a girl of his own age, about sixteen, who viewed him with respectful adoration. He wore a wide-brimmed hat from which waved hair cascaded, a shirt out of *Oklahoma!* and a supersonic tie, a tight tweed jacket padded hugely at the shoulders, and shoes that were like stilts of crêpe rubber. He had the blasé manner of a keen student of the high life of Hollywood, and was not at all a nice boy, but you felt immediately sorry for anyone so young in such a muddle; and the experts told you that as a type he has taken the place of the muffled tough, now nearly extinct, for whose straightforward love of muscular violence he has substituted a morbid hunger to dance and to play the film star with the girls. They also told you that he drifted into mixed clubs because they gave him freer scope for exhibitionism, and that if he did somehow join a boys' club he soon left it because he was not prepared to play his part in communal life.

The second boy was the same age, but as full of spirit as the other was dull and silly. His clothes were tattered, but he laughed a lot and had just wiped the eye of a much

bigger boy at table tennis. His background was terrible—father a soak, mother on and off the streets, brother in prison—and, since he was the kind of boy who knew everybody, the razor-blade practitioners were among his friends. But here, the experts told you, was one of the best members on their roll. He was just as much the child of industrialism as the other, yet his club was holding him against all the crooked magnets waiting for him outside. Even if that club had done nothing else it would have justified itself by him, but you had only to step into it to realize how much it was doing for a hundred other members.

The first boys' club in this country started in 1872, and twenty-five years ago the National Association of Boys' Clubs was formed as a parent body, to which are now affiliated the County Associations and the Federations of the big provincial cities. It includes nearly three thousand clubs with a total membership of over two hundred thousand boys between the ages of twelve and twenty, most of whom are in the fourteen-eighteen group; it has a Royal Charter and is a

charity; and though in itself non-denominational many church clubs of different faiths are embodied in it. Also it includes mixed clubs in which the boys' special activities are kept separate. Some of these institutions (dear to local authorities for their comparative cheapness) are excellent, but the N.A.B.C. takes the view that, at least until his character is stabilized, a boy develops more naturally with his own sex.

The main functions of the N.A.B.C. are to make policy, to research, to advise and to run training schools where leaders and seniors can learn the complicated business of helping boys to live fuller and better lives.

And a complicated business it is. You sometimes come across the notion that a boys' club is nothing more than a friendly fount of tea and buns, designed to keep boys off the streets, or at most to inculcate the theory that a decent way of living follows automatically on the acquisition of a good leg-break. But in fact a club conducted on such lines—a very few still are—doesn't begin to touch the thorny problems of the modern boy. These are no longer mainly economic. One of the most difficult types to-day is the lad of eighteen who is earning a man's wage and has no responsibilities. The dogs, the pub, the cinema and the dance-hall are after his money, and immoderate doses of any of them don't do him any good. If you put on one side the boy who is by upbringing a marginal criminal it still isn't easy to imagine the heavy adjustments society demands





of a perfectly normal boy of fifteen shot straight from school into a factory, where he may be put to pull a lever in a meaningless machine for wages he often has no idea how to spend intelligently. What this boy does with his leisure for the next few years will decide whether he is to grow up an irresponsible or a useful citizen.

The aim of the N.A.B.C. and its member units is to make him the latter. By teaching him to fit cheerfully into a self-governing community and to have a hand in his own discipline it moulds his character; and by showing him how to improve his mental and physical abilities it gives him a chance of happiness. This is fine, but in an age morally knocked sideways by two wars something more is needed, and this can be found only in the positive background of religion that colours the life of the most successful boys' clubs—not a Victorian regimentation, but the kind that brings boys of their own accord to their club service.

How much the religious outlook is made to matter in a club really depends on the man in charge, the Club Leader, on whose personal relationship with the boys, as a friend and not as a master, everything in a club finally hinges. The right man—or woman—can do anything with boys. Eighty per cent of club leaders are voluntary, and though many wholetime paid leaders run first-rate clubs the salaries they accept argue that their work is a vocation. The entire club movement has been built up on the principle of voluntary leadership

and help, and this is a virtue that the State, and, even more, academic sociologists, often fail to understand. If ever boys' clubs should be dominated by the professional, however expert he might appear on paper, their spirit would be sadly changed.

The shortage of good voluntary leaders is one of the N.A.B.C.'s main headaches, a bigger one than finance (boys' subscriptions of 3d. to 1s. a week, grants from local authorities, gifts and clubs' earnings leave the N.A.B.C. annually short of about £20,000, the whole movement of about £70,000). Anyone reading in his evening paper of the latest battering of an old lady, and wanting to do something about it, could scarcely find a more promising place to start.

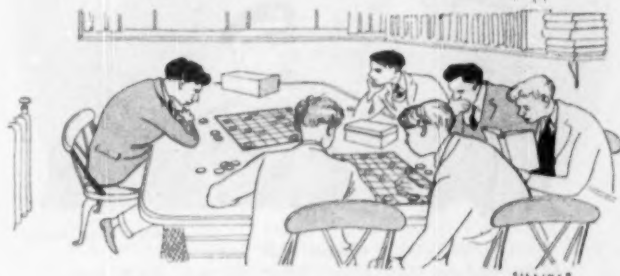
But more serious still is the Government's decision that grants from public funds for the building of new clubs must cease. In the present crime emergency this seems lamentably short-sighted, however pressed we are for dollars. Clubs parked in other people's houses can never be the same, and new clubs, properly equipped, are urgently needed.

Looking at its evening paper, Whitehall might think again.

If I have made boys' clubs sound solemn that is the very last thing they seem. They are magnificently gay. The welcome you get, and the honest uninhibited din, and the number of keen works in progress, leave you reeling. Table tennis, not patball but the kind where you stand back and lay on satanic cuts, tops all. There is a club ladder for it, and over there a match is being fought against another club. The billiards tables are crowded. On the stage in the big hall the next play is taking shape. Up in the library, well stocked, half a dozen boys read peacefully in quiet they may not get at home, and two more are at chess. You can hear a gym class somewhere, and over here in the crafts shop a group bends over a big model aeroplane. Life hums and evenings are far too short.

Add camp. Add cricket and football, and boxing. And, remembering the conditions many of these lads go back to, there can't be much doubt about boys' clubs.

ERIC KEOWN



AT THE PICTURES

They were not Divided—On the Town

IMPOSSIBLE to deny that *They were not Divided* (Director: TERENCE YOUNG) is a disappointment. It sets out to tell part of the story of the Guards Armoured Division in the war, with particular reference to three men who enlisted at the same time in 1940; but alas, they are very conventional figures. The two friends referred to in the title, since they are to die together, of course become officers; the third friend, being a humorous Irishman (in the Welsh Guards—a painstakingly laughable touch), of course winds up as an N.C.O. The words "of course" are lamentably justified at every turn of the narrative. The rigours of early life in the Army, even though exaggerated by the fact that this is the Guards, take their expected course; we are not even spared a variant of the old "Play the piano! Go and shift it" joke, and most people in the audience seem enraptured to renew acquaintance with it. Other well-known bits of facetiousness turn up, notably that classic comment on the vexations of battle "The noise!—and the people!" It is strange and rather depressing to notice how much less grown-up is the attitude, here compared with that of such U.S. pictures as *Battleground*. The

difference is not easy to pin down or define; *Battleground* is undoubtedly "box-office" and is calculated to make its necessary appeal to the lowest common denominator in the audience; and yet the feeling behind it makes much of *They were not Divided* look like schoolboy stuff. Certainly I found *Battleground* at certain points far more emotionally moving than this, which makes far more obvious efforts to be emotionally moving by including glimpses of home life, a wife, a sweetheart, scenes of parting. The best part of the film is its climax, its impression of the roaring turmoil of an armoured battle; the least satisfactory passages, I think, are those involving direct or indirect sermons on Anglo-American understanding.

On the Town (Directors: GENE KELLY and STANLEY DONEN) is a really brilliant musical, very enjoyable indeed. After a long course of conventional semi-naturalistic musical films, in which the demands of verisimilitude were treated with deadening respect and most of the songs and dances had to be laboriously wedged in to the framework

*(On the Town)***Matlo Stuff**

Ivy Smith—VERA-ELLEN; Gabey—GENE KELLY

of a more or less straight story by transparently contrived devices (usually the characters were supposed to be appearing in or rehearsing for a stage show), it is a delight to find something designed and performed as a musical, worked out from beginning to end on a basis of music and dancing and songs—attractive music, literate songs and brilliant dancing at that. Even the camera dances: it advances and recedes, swings and lunges in a calculated way that is beautifully effective. The story concerns three sailors on leave for twenty-four hours in New York; between 6 A.M. and 6 A.M. they've

*Gotta see the whole town
From Yonkers on down
To the Bay.*

and in the company of three girls they do manage to see a great deal of it. The speed, the vitality, the flashing colour and design, the tricks of timing by which motion is fitted to music, the wit and invention and the superlative technical accomplishment make *On the Town* a really exhilarating experience.

Survey(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

I haven't yet seen most of the new London shows: DANNY KAYE in *The Inspector General* (distantly related to the play by Gogol) seems the best bet.

There are two notable releases: *Morning Departure* (15/3/50), the submarine story, and *The Happiest Days of Your Life* (22/3/50), a simple but very amusing comedy.

RICHARD MALLETT

*(They were not Divided)***Guards Stuff**

Philip—EDWARD UNDERDOWN; R.S.M. BRITTAIN; C.S.M. KING

ANOTHER LETTER FROM LUCY

DEAR MRS. V.—One thing I like best about being in Rep again after Panto is you're mixing with your own kind and can understand the language.

This isn't a posh Rep because the people in Gaunt-on-Sea don't go in for art and that, all they want is a bit of a laugh or someone being strangled and no long words. Of course, I wouldn't mind playing Shakespeare or one of those, but I like to know what I'm talking about even if the audience doesn't. One posh thing we are going to do in the season is *Jane Eyre*, which is quite classical in a way. People will always go to see that, even in Gaunt-on-Sea, especially if it rains.

The theatre used to be a boiled-sweet factory, although you wouldn't think so to look at it. There's no gallery, but the back two rows of the circle are nincence, and have no carpet. The dressing-rooms are underneath, and when people bang about on the stage plaster falls in your sink. Three dressing-rooms have H. and C., and the other one had the hot tap broken off by a leading-lady in a temperament, and the manager says it's not up to him, it's up to her to send the tap back, but she's in the West End now and doesn't care. I don't know what Equity is doing about it.

The people in the company seem very nice, but it always takes a week or two to find out what they're really like, and I've got my suspicions about some of them already. The character-woman thinks she's everybody, and actually asked me if this was my first engagement. I soon put her in her place and we're not speaking at the moment. The leading-man says he turned down a pre-London tour to come here because he wanted a rest, but I know for a fact he's been doing one-night stands in Wales for a year, and only got this job because he didn't argue about the money. The woman who calls herself the leading-juvenile is forty if she's a day. She hangs up her washing all over the place, and says she'll be glad to get back into films, although the only thing she ever did was a passer-by

in a documentary about life in a mining town, and her sequence was cut out, and I'm not surprised. The producer gives you a move one morning and alters it the next, so you never know whether you're coming or going. I believe the only experience he's ever had was producing two concerts for some Boy Scouts in a parish hall in Burnley, but he's got the gift of the gab and his mother knows the manager. Still, they all seem very nice up to now. The one I like best is the juvenile-man. He found me digs away from the smell of the gas-works, and says I remind him of Judy Garland. He seems quite intelligent.

The way they make the money here is in the bar. The third act hasn't got to go up until everyone has been served. In most theatres the S.M. presses a button that rings a bell in the bar to warn the customers the play is starting again, but here the barmaid presses a button that rings a bell back-stage to tell the S.M. they can't sell any more beer so he might as well get on with the show. Then if the show starts running late you have to cut the middles out of your long speeches.

That will make the work very interesting and full of variety.

I open with *Beds and Blushes*, which is more of a farce. Shall need a charming negligée (that's what they think!) and a stunning evening dress. Must ask Prod. if I can play it in a jumper and skirt. I have to hide under a bed, in a cupboard, in a linen-chest, under a pile of hay, behind a screen, behind a door, in a secret passage, in a clothes-basket, under a sofa, in a wardrobe, and under the eiderdown. I envy the leading-man. He has to hide on the chandelier. He dresses up as me, I dress up as Mrs. Barchester, the character-man dresses up as Stanley, and we all run up and down shouting. It's great fun, and quite a change. They'll love it.

Yours affec.,

LUCY

P.S.—Please send jumper and skirt. In cardboard-box in third drawer down. Also press-cuttings and bottle of leg-tan I left in kitchenette if no one's taken them; also dig out photo of me in Pamela's cyster sweater for front of House. (Give my love to the man upstairs, and tell him he can have my frying-pan.



"Why can't you read your newspaper at breakfast like any other self-respecting man?"

SPRING ON A TRAM

IT is a wonderful morning. Even S.E.1 is beautiful this morning. The bright red tram, beached in the middle of Southwark Street where its terminus is marked ingenuously by a mere discontinuance of track, beckons me irresistibly. Prickling to a sense of adventure I approach the noble beast. I do not know when I last rode on a tram.

"Good morning," I say brightly to the conductress, who is doing arithmetic in a corner seat. "I suddenly feel I want to ride on a tram."

"Two-and-three and six is two-and-nine," says the conductress, adding more loudly, "Other end on."

I had forgotten. Every tram, of course, is really two trams; the one that comes and the one that goes. I smile at the conductress undaunted and go gallily to the other end, the one that is going. What an intriguing spiral staircase! What a prodigality of limpid glass on the upper, or sun, deck! How delightful, by a turn of the wrist, to make one's seat face in the opposite direction!

From my lonely eyrie I look down with compassion upon the cloth caps of the Borough, going about their earthbound business. Foolish men, not to join me on the top of my tram!

Now we have started, pitching exhilaratingly in long, loping seesaws. The mechanism grinds powerfully. The bell clangs. I open a window and put my hand out. The cool morning breeze caresses it.

"Where to?" says the conductress, who has approached unnoticed from the stern. I draw my hand in quickly, feeling guilty. Traffic behind may, I realize, have thought I was giving a signal—though, if it comes to that, the voyage of a tram is rigidly pre-ordained as to direction, so perhaps after all . . .

I mention these thoughts to the conductress, implicitly inviting her to join me in a spirit of fun and irresponsibility.

"Where to?" she says.

"I haven't the slightest idea."

You see, I simply don't care this morning. That is how the spring affects me. Ordinarily I would never

dare to say such a thing to a conductress, but to-day I can endure any rebuff. As it happens, my jovial air has taken its toll of her; she gives me a close look and, a little later, a shy smile; she sits down companionably on the nearest seat.

"Just don't care where, eh?" she says.

"Anywhere you like," I say. "Absolutely anywhere."

"I see," she says, with another smile.

"Between you and me," I say, with an amusing air of mock-seriousness, "I don't even know where this tram *does* go."

She has very large black eyes, this conductress. She flashes them down the empty deck behind us and then says in a confidential tone "What about a nice three-ha'penny to Blackfriars?"

I consider this. It does not sound far enough, and I tell her so, giving her a roguish glance; at least, it feels like one; it is not always possible to be sure that a middle-aged face faithfully reflects the brightness of the spirit.

"Don't you worry, dear," she says.

"I'm not."

"You looked worried."

"I was smiling roguishly."

"Oh." She nods several times. "Look," she says presently, "tell you what I'll do. Drop you the bottom of Savoy Street, then you can nip up an' you're in the Strand, see?"

"Let's . . . all . . . go-down-the-Strand," I chant irrepressibly.

"Beg pardon?"

"You know—'Have-a-banana!'"

"Ta, dear, no. Just had my elevenses."

Is the brief *entente* cooling off?

"Won't you," I say with pathos, "let me come with you as far as Westminster Bridge?"

"Well—" The large black eyes rest on me thoughtfully.

"After all, earth has not anything to show more fair."

"Only a penny more fare," she says, fingering her ticket-rack undecidably. "Westminster, tuppence-ha'penny."

"No, no," I say. "It's poetry. 'Dull would he be of soul—'"

But she suddenly gets up. "Just a mo, dear." She goes quickly down the empty deck to her companion-way and rattles down, remembering perhaps that she has other friends to make on the lower deck.

I gazed happily out of my gigantic gun-turret. We are across Blackfriars Bridge now. On the left a string of South Eastern Gas Board barges glides on the glistening river. . . . The tram slows for the first time, then stops, though there is no official stop so far as I can see.

When a tram stops the silence is terrific. Voices from the lower deck mount the spiral staircases with ease. They are very clear. A man's voice first.

"We could get an inspector," it says. "It's an inspector we want."

"I'm not waiting that long," says the voice of the conductress. "E don't care where 'e goes, wavin' out the window, pulling faces, singing, quoting poetry, asked me to 'ave a banana. I've kep' 'im humoured this long, now either he goes or me, take your pick."

There is a stirring of strong boots.

"All right," says the driver reluctantly. "Suppose I've gotter go up and chuck 'im orf."

But I am not waiting that long. I leave hurriedly by the back stairs. As the scarlet monster presently sails majestically on its way the conductress catches sight of me leaning on the Embankment wall. For a moment she is expressionless. Then she suddenly puts her thumbs to her temples and twiddles her fingers violently, rolling her large black eyes.

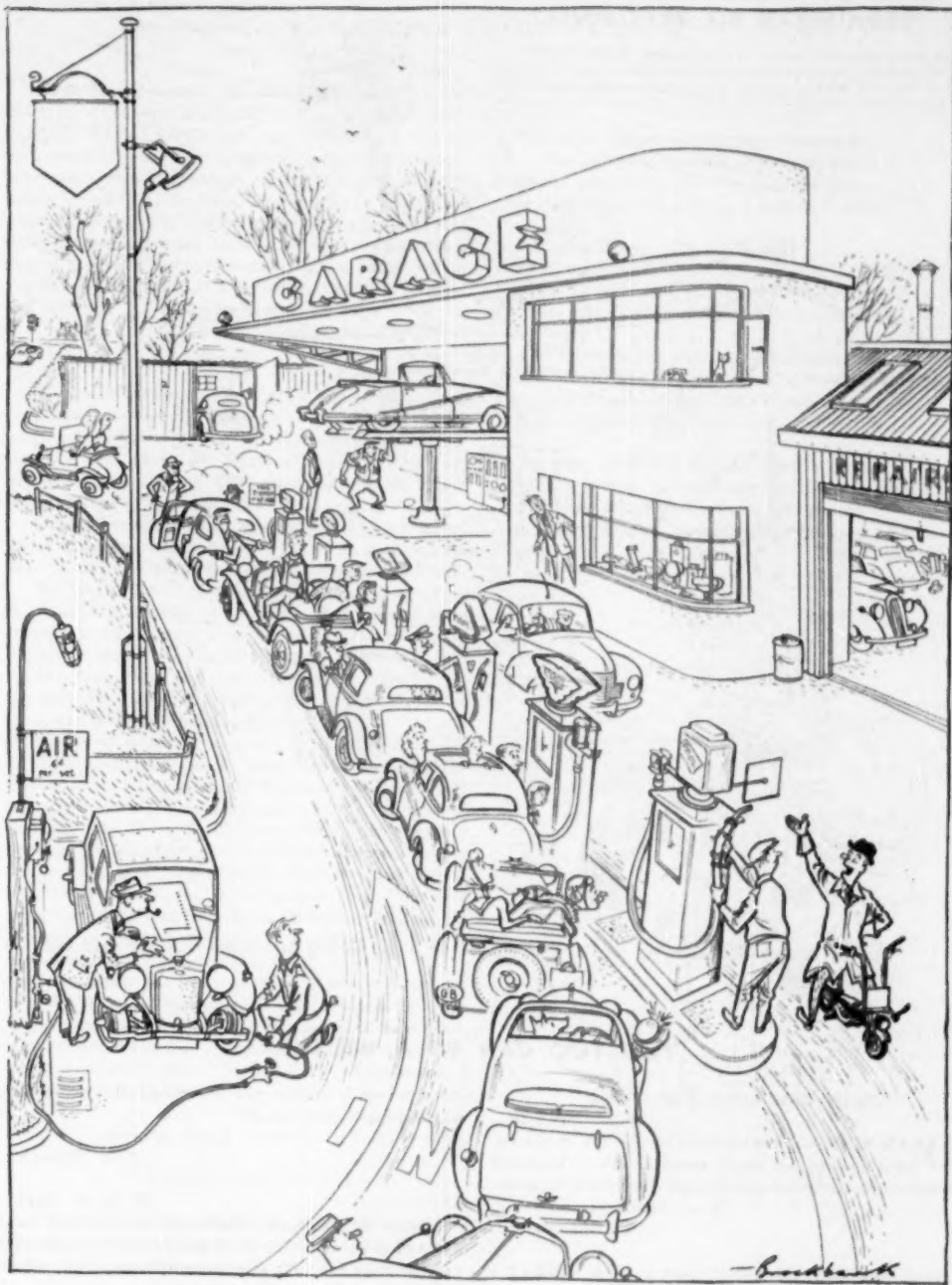
She means, I think, to be kind.

J. B. BOOTHROYD

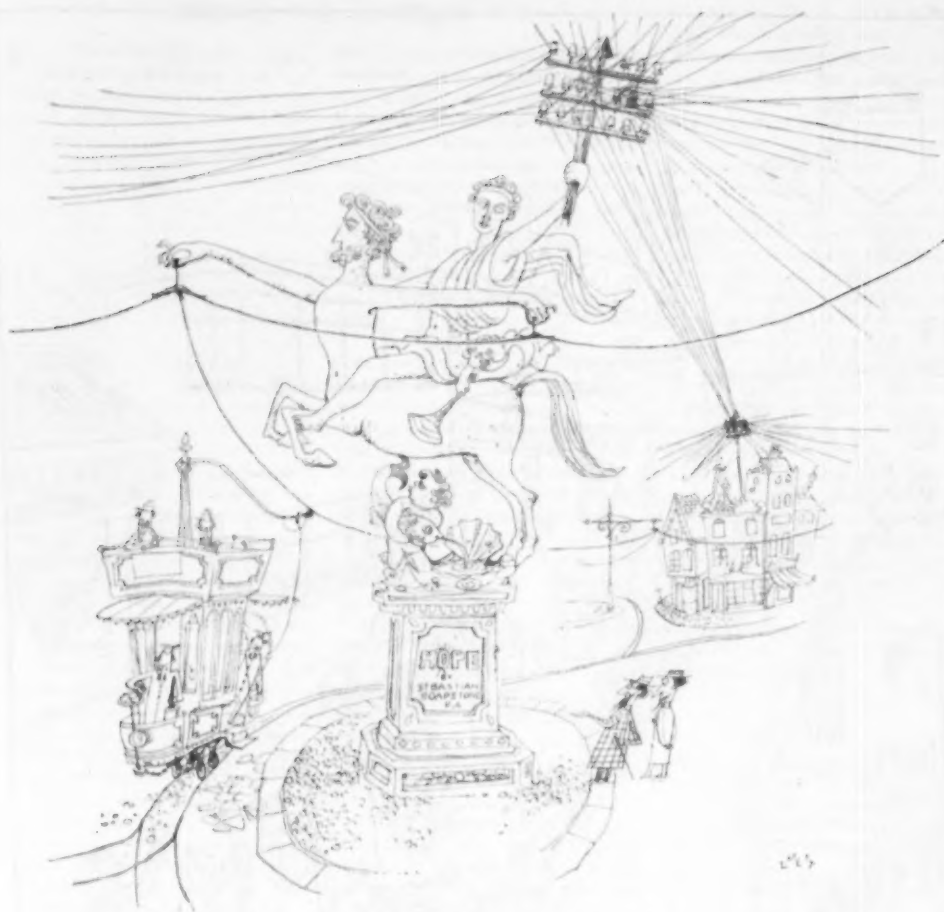
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Pillar of Broadcasting House

PILLAR of Broadcasting House, Voice that a nation reveres, Voice that can faint-hearts arouse, Or disintegrate glass chandeliers, Virile as Feodor's bass, Mellow as Benjamin's chimes, Say that this isn't your face That I see in the *Radio Times*.



"Fill her up!"



"I had an absolutely free hand with it, except for a few fiddling suggestions from the tram and telephone people."

YOU TOO CAN BE A WRITER

To the Acme School of Authorship

10/1/49

DEAR SIRS,—Yours to hand of the 6th, re Course (Authorship) for which many thanks. Enclosed herewith please find cheque being coverage fees for same.

Yours faithfully,

P. B. CLARKE

23/2/49

DEAR SIR,—With regard to yours of the 15th, for which I thank you, I have enclosed herewith the short

story, which is the exercise following lessons Nos. 1-9, which I have completed.

Yours sincerely,

P. B. CLARKE

March 27, 1949

DEAR MR. READER,—Following on your very kind letter of the twenty-fourth, I should like to thank you very heartily for your most esteemed criticism, which has received my extremely earnest attention. I enclose my second short story, as the exercise on lessons

ten to nineteen, hoping most sincerely that it will meet with your much valued approval.

Yours sincerely, PERCIVAL CLARKE

May 3, 1949

DEAR MR. READER,—On Monday I received your letter of criticism, which I read with very great interest. I need hardly say how delighted I was to find, not only words of praise, but, no less encouraging, the constructive suggestions with regard to those very points on which I had felt misgivings. I hope that with this short story, which I wrote after a most careful study of lessons twenty to twenty-nine, paying attention at the same time, of course, to the points which you raised, you will find a great improvement in style and content.

Yours sincerely,

PERCIVAL BENJAMIN CLARKE

June 9, 1949

MY DEAR READER,—Monday, it was; a grey, tired day, with the taste of weekend freedom sour in its mouth—Monday, cowering sullenly before the ponderous week that lay ahead. Monday, and early breakfast in the cold grey dawn, that crouched outside like a damp shroud of hopelessness.

On the breakfast table, lying whitely by my plate, where a greasy sausage slumped lifelessly, grotesquely, next to the screaming red of a tomato, was a letter.

But from whom? Was it good news or bad? Was it, perhaps, a message of hope, the whiteness of hope among the long dismal sausages of the future? Could it contain aught but despair on such a morning?

Impatient with my vain conjectures, I seized the envelope and, with one sweep of my knife, ripped it open, and wrenched out the letter...

The inert body on the plate had long grown cold, its fat congealed around it, when I read the letter for the last time. As I crumpled it into my pocket a new light shone in my eye—a light of triumph, of victory, that gave the lie to the despair of the grey morning. No more the trials, no more the bitter anguish of doubt, the long nights of inner struggle; the tortuous hours of labour had borne fruit. My ordeal was over. My final short story had been passed—the School of Authorship Diploma of Honour was mine! Within a few days it would arrive—I was a writer!

I fell upon the sausage with a new vigour and devoured it in an instant, while my thoughts went out for a moment to the man who had laboured so unceasingly to help me, whose inspiration had spurred me over on to fresh endeavour. To my tutor, Mr. Reader, I raised my fork in momentary salute...

By Percival Benjamin
(PERCIVAL B. CLARKE)

To Percival B. Clarke, Esq.

12/7/49

DEAR SIR,—Yours to hand of the 9th inst., re Honour (Diploma of) for which many thanks. Enclosed herewith please find same and good luck.

Yours sincerely, A. C. READER

LINES ADDRESSED TO A COMMITTEE OF EXAMINERS

"The children were asked to write 100-word passages: (1) describing a familiar object like a kitchen-sink; (2) describing a landscape seen in a dream; and (3) in the form of a post card addressed to a ghost."—"The Times Educational Supplement."

YOU, who assess and file the infant mind,
Dividers into seconds, firsts and thirds,
What, in your folly, did you hope to find
In their strait measure of a hundred words?

A realist, perhaps, with ready pen
As charged with blood and tears as muddy ink?
A frank historian of the ways of men
Under the symbol of the kitchen sink?

Or one who saw the dim enchanted hills
And watched, in sleep, with wild and wondering eyes
The sunless caverns and the sinuous rills
And drank, by Alph, the milk of Paradise?

Or Hamlet, when the sudden dawn was red
And cock-crow scared away his father's ghost,
Sending the wildered words he left unsaid
In decent English through the twopenny post?

G. H. VALLINS



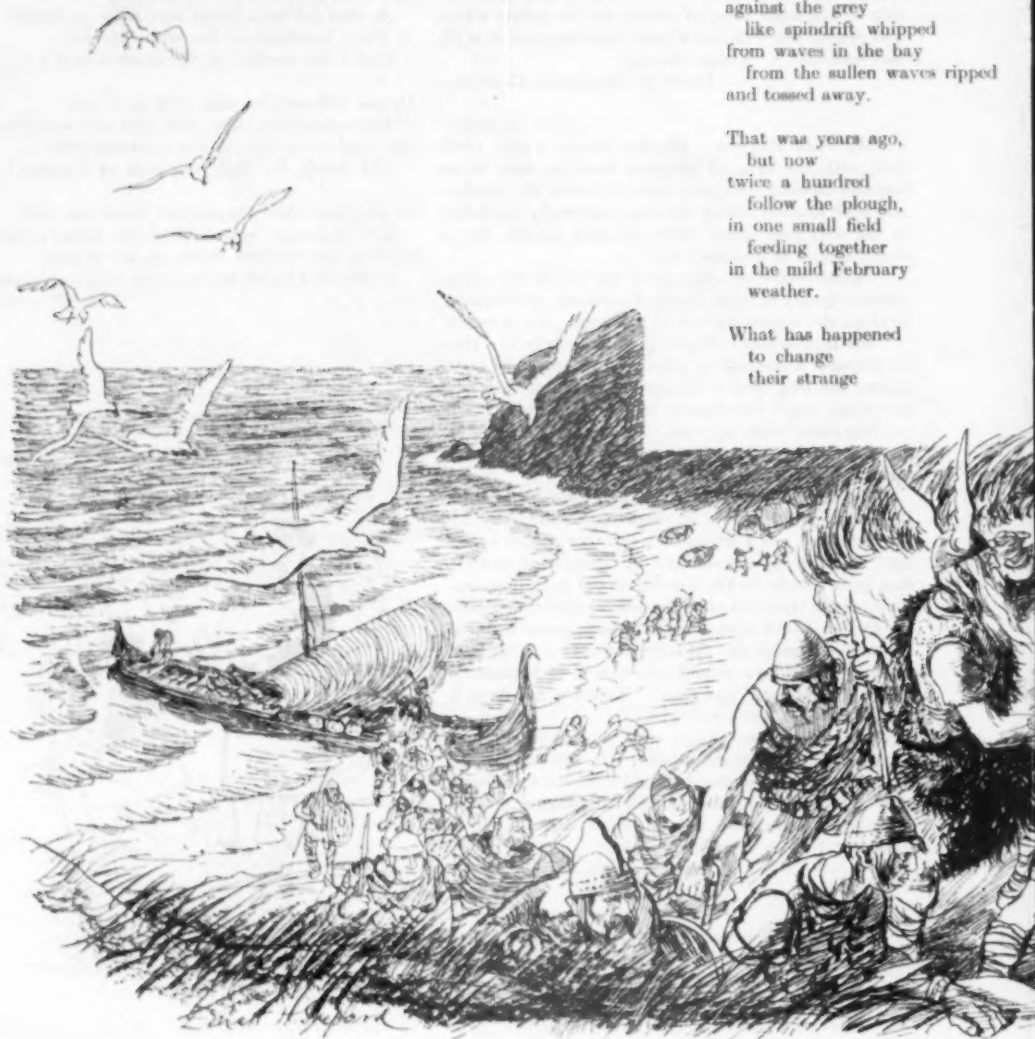
"Would you mind, lady? My life's complicated enough as it is..."

CAPTAIN KET

IN savage weather
 years ago
 gulls came in the wake
 of the Denchman crow—
 old Danish pirate!—
 inland,
 to fly
 between the brown earth
 and the sleet sky:
 their white wings flecking
 against the grey
 like spindrift whipped
 from waves in the bay
 from the sullen waves ripped
 and tossed away.

That was years ago,
 but now
 twice a hundred
 follow the plough,
 in one small field
 feeding together
 in the mild February
 weather.

What has happened
 to change
 their strange

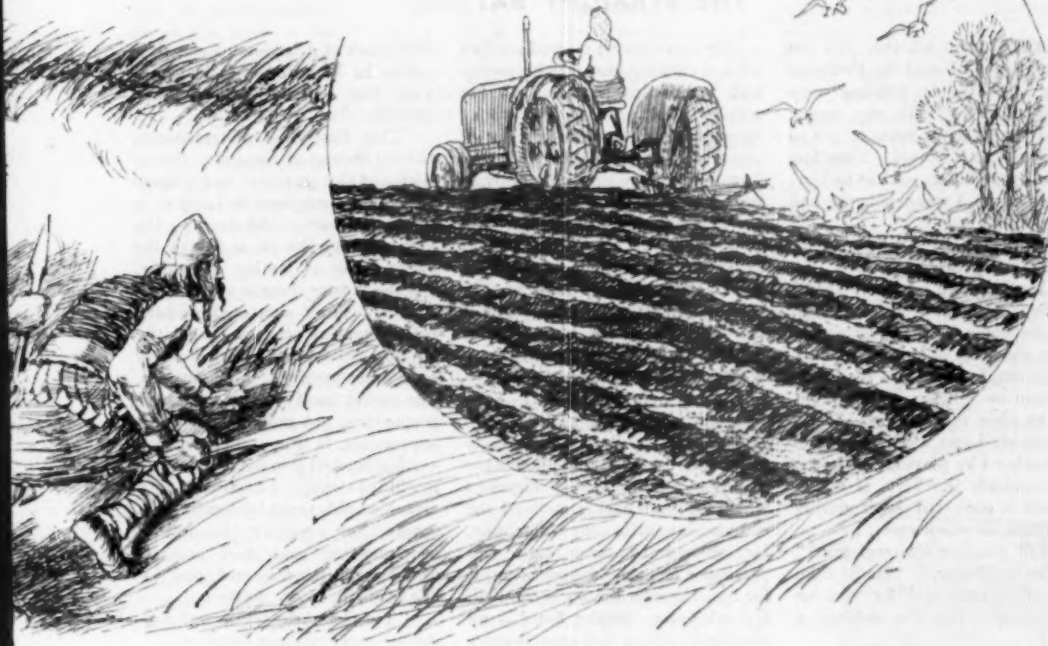


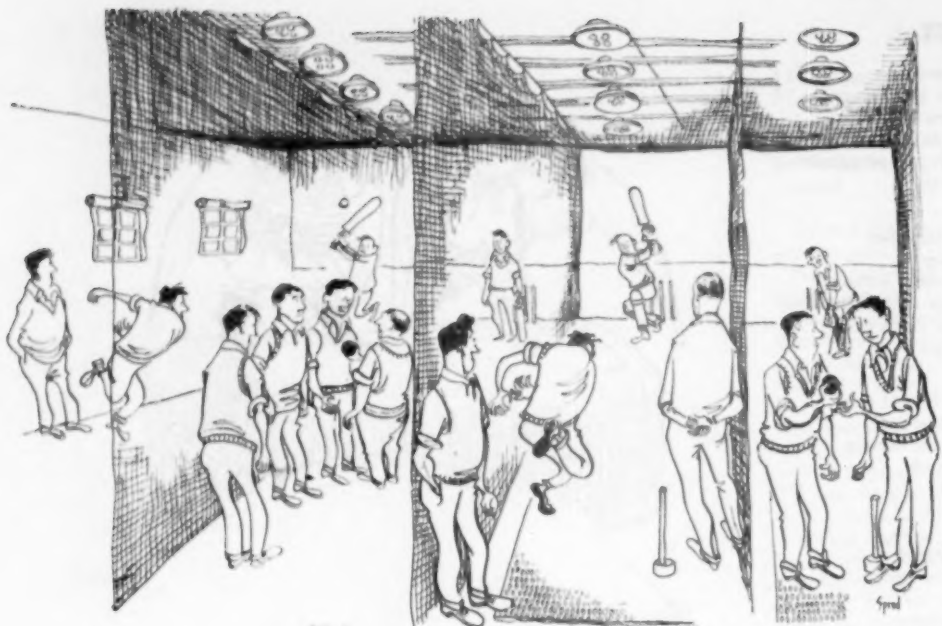
LE'S FANCY

hearts' desire
that now they range
these broken chocolate
furrows, to dig
beaks where the ploughman
sets his rig!

Why have they lost
the ecstasy
that made them scream
when their souls went free
between the cliff's rim
and the sea?

Perhaps each bold-eyed
fierce-beaked gull
like a little red captain
feels the pull
sea-rovers do
in dreams:
to stand
straddle-legged
the unheaving land:
done with the salt winds
and the sea-mists—
Wharfedale Particular Methodists
R. C. SCRIVEN





THE STRAIGHT BAT

"I DON'T know whether you can help me," I said to Professor Gover. "There's nothing very seriously wrong with my game, except that I don't seem to get so many runs as I should. Take last season, for instance; against Ockley, I think it was, I was seeing the ball as big . . ."

"Have you an appointment?" said Professor Gover.

"You'll notice," I said, "that I play back rather more than forward, after the style of the Australians. A very short lift of the bat—rather reminiscent, I suppose, of Woodfull, Fingleton or Morris. Now I don't want to alter my basic style, you understand; I just want you to tell me whether I'm playing inside the ball or outside it. That is unless the fault's corrected itself during the winter, in which case . . ."

"Will you see the registrar?" said the professor. "He'll take down all details and fix you an appointment. It's ten shillings a lesson."

Professor Gover popped another stick of chewing-gum into his mouth and turned his attention to net number three, where four young speed merchants (fast bowlers, if you aren't *au fait* with our cricketing lingo) were trying to destroy a young Surrey professional of promise. One after the other they charged to the bowling mark and exploded, arms flying in all directions. The ball whizzed up the corridor of netting and matting, and the batsman placed his left boot outside the off-stump and withdrew his bat from circulation.

"Well left alone!" I said. Frankly, it was one of the nicest bits of leaving alone I have ever seen, quite in the Harry Makepeace tradition, and I was very surprised when Professor Gover stopped the cannonade to utter a forceful rebuke. He seemed to think that this particular ball should have been hit for four through the covers. Well, I don't know; hitting fours is all very well, but a batsman doesn't

look much of a batsman these days unless he knows how to leave the long hop outside the off-stump severely alone.

This East Hill (Wandsworth) Cricket School of Sandham, Strudwick and Gover, one of half a dozen cricketing academies in London, is now in full swing. All day long the balls fly and the air is full of the sweet music of leather on willow. For the bowler there is at times the sweet music of shattered wickets, real authentic stuff, even though the stumps are on springs and never need an umpire's ministrations. The wicket itself or pitch, a strange preparation not unlike linoleum in appearance, is true and easy-paced—a feather bed you might say—but it will take spin. I tried to satisfy myself on this point by bowling my googly, but somehow the netting (side-netting and roof-netting) would get in the way and spoil the line of flight of my deliveries.

"You'll find the registrar downstairs," said Professor Gover.

Downstairs, in a room full of cricket bats and pads and the delicious odour of linseed oil, the registrar was at work on the school's time-table and curriculum. On the following day a county wicket-keeper would begin a refresher course in stumping, two parties of schoolboy batsmen would resume their attempts to dethrone Compton and Hutton, a bunch of club cricketers from Essex would be criticizing their new captain for the first time and a host of eager amateurs and professionals would be preparing scientifically for a season of devastating success culminating in an invitation to join the M.C.C. tour of Australia next winter.

A cricketer either dislikes net practice intensely as a dreadful chore or he has this capacity to dream dreams of greatness. There is no intermediate state of indifference. Here at East Hill the eyes of every young batsman blaze with excitement. His lips are set in a hard line of determination: he is the hope of his side, carrying the full burden of his club's, county's or country's honour upon his tense shoulders. Every ball bowled to him is charged with glory. He pulls a short one hard into the side-netting three feet from his bat, but in his mind's eye the hit travels hard and high into the stand. Above the applause he hears the scuffle of spectators as they take avoiding action. He sees the figures alongside **BATSMAN NO. 5** whip round to include yet another six. All this is instantaneous. Then, glowing with pride, he knocks the ball back along the matting to the bowler and squares up to meet the next instalment of the onslaught. I know: I've scored as many centuries for England in the nets as any man alive. Armstrong! Gregory! Grimmett? O'Reilly? Lindwall? Good bowlers, yes, but how ordinary they seemed to a batsman who was not afraid to hit.

There are people who hold the view that indoor practice—even in

daylight as at East Hill—on matting or some synthetic turf is of no real help to a cricketer, that practice on velvet grass is the only useful preparation for match-play. They forget that many, if not most, of our great cricketers acquired their skill in backyards and alleys, on cinders, asphalt, rubble and rough grazing. "Two or three days a week," wrote "W. G." in his *Cricket*, "my father and a number of companions were in the habit of going to the Downs (Durdham Downs) and practising between the hours of five and eight in the morning. In that way only could he continue the game he loved so well..." And Bradman! "I have mentioned," writes Mr. A. G. Moyes in his book on the modern master,

"that young Bradman practised batting with a home-made bat or stump and a golf-ball. He did not have any wicket... so, very ingeniously, he used the brick base of an old water-tank as a bowler. As the ball rebounded he hit it..." He was not satisfied unless he connected three times out of four."

And so we could continue with endless quotations in support of backyard practice, right down to those who favour practice at the breakfast-table with a bread-knife and a roll and the coffee-pot for a wicket.

"Why," I said to the registrar, "take my own experience. I used to practise for hours on end with an old piece of lead-piping and..."

"Would next Wednesday suit you?" he said, moistening the end of his pencil. "I think I can fit you in just after lunch."

So I went back upstairs through the locker-rooms to the nets. The balls were still flying as thick as hail-stones, but through the storm I managed to discern Professor Sandham, the old Surrey and England partner of Jack Hobbs. A youngster from a famous northern school was batting and the professor was laying down the law of defence in depth. "If you're going forward,"

he said, "go forward: don't stop half-way." The young man obediently stretched himself down the wicket to the next ball which happened to be something very like a long hop. "Not as far as that, lad," said the professor, "you'll never get back." The next ball was a half-volley pitched outside the off-stump. For a moment I thought the boy would play forward yet again, but at the last second he lunged weakly at the ball and spooned it at the roof of the net. "Now that was a lackadaisical shot," said the professor, and he picked up the bowling stump and made passes through the air with it to show exactly how the half-volley should have been clouted between mid-off and extra-cover to the boundary. The boy repeated the motions somewhat awkwardly and timidly.

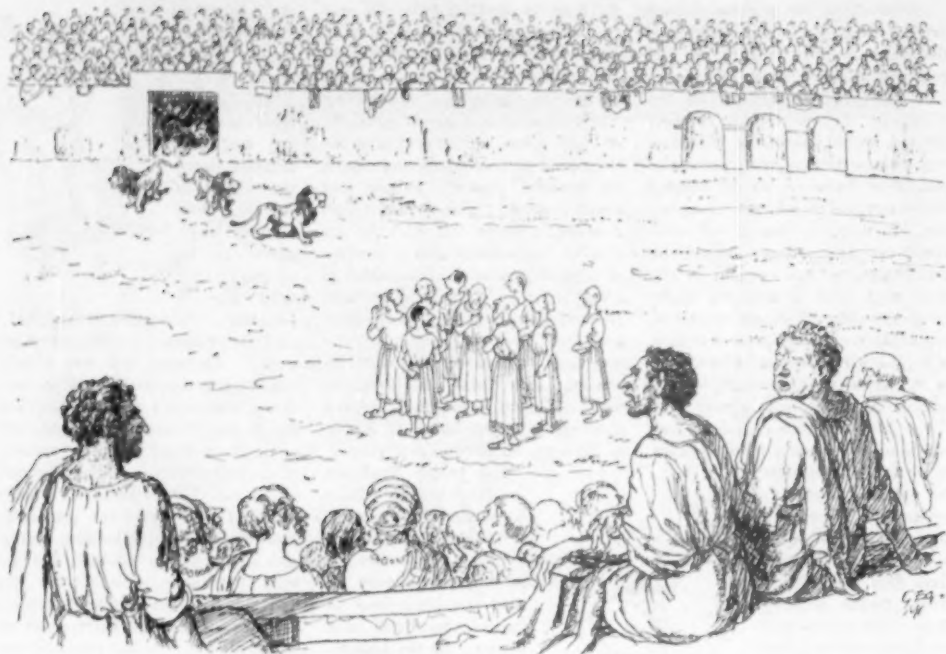
"Have a look at the visitors' book," said Professor Sandham, "and you'll see that our students are drawn from all grades of cricket and walks of life. We had Mr. Strachey down here some time ago: shaped very well indeed—as a cricketer I mean, of course. Touring teams, youth clubs, stars and beginners—we get 'em all."

At that moment the young batsman jumped out and drove the ball hard down the wicket chest-high. With my reflexes working beautifully I made a side-step to the left and took the ball cleanly on the tips of my fingers.

I didn't sign the visitors' book.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD





"I wouldn't have come if I'd known it was amateur night."

CURIOUSLY HIGH FREQUENCY

ALL this television. We shall never be free of it now, I suppose. For better or worse it is come to stay, like the electric telephone and the horseless carriage. It obtrudes everywhere. Those H-shaped aerials are now so numerous that I find them even more irritating than I did in the years before I found out what they were. And how did I find out? Why, by seeing a joke about them in a paper. Almost every paper you pick up now, whether within range of television or not, has something to say about it, usually jokes, and it is beginning to undermine me.

To-day I called on Theobald Figg the artist.

"Come," he said, handing me a cigarette with a viridian tip at one end and turpentine at the other. "Let us see how the man is getting on."

"The man" was a small elderly

one in a bowler hat who had come to install Figg's new—yes, yes—new television set. He seemed to be finishing.

"Does it work?" asked Figg.

The little man fell to work on the knobs, with some interesting scenic effects.

"It does," I remarked, encouragingly.

With more twiddling he caused some kind of a moving picture to appear on the screen.

"There are spare films, I suppose," I said. "You will get tired of this one. I am tired of it already."

I endeavoured to be intelligent.

"How," I inquired, "are these machines affected by the new wavelengths?"

"Not at all," said the little man.

"Up in the very high frequencies there's bags of room."

"Ah," I said.

"Quite so," said Figg. "With a thing like television one would expect very high frequencies, no doubt."

He, too, was trying to appear intelligent. I thought of another question. "Don't they have wavelengths in television—only frequencies?"

"Well, yes, they do," the expert admitted, "but we don't usually mention them."

I blushed slightly and Figg coughed and looked out of the window.

"If you really want to know," said the little man, broadmindedly, "the wavelengths from Alexandra Palace are six point six six for vision and seven point two three for sound."

"Feet?" asked Figg. "Miles? Yards? Rods?"

"Metres." The little man was

packing his screwdrivers into a small gladstone bag with an insulated handle.

"Metres!" Figg exclaimed. "But dash it, other places have hundreds of metres. 'Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh,' for instance, has one thousand five hundred, I know."

"True," I agreed, feeling myself to be on firm ground for a moment. "And besides, you said *high* frequencies, *very* high. What's this talk of sixes and sevens!"

"Wavelength," said the little man, "is metres. Frequency is cycles."

He looked at us. We looked at him. I suppose he thought we were waiting for more.

"Or kilocycles," he added.

"Ah, yes," I said, but realized I was thinking of kilometres, and said no more.

"Or *μεγακύκλοι* more likely. A *μεγακύκλος*, of course, is a million *κύκλοι*."

Or he may have said megacycles. It was Greek to me anyway.

"Well, a cycle is one complete wave, and in television sound you get forty-five million of them a second—that's forty-five megacycles a second, which is very high frequency."

"Oh, I don't know, I don't know," said Figg. The man looked at him. "Perhaps you're right," he said and subsided.

"If a cycle is equal to a wave it follows that at this rate a wave can't be very long, doesn't it?"

Nobody contradicted him.

"Wavelength being equal to speed divided by frequency, we get the fraction three hundred million over forty-five million, which gives us an answer of six point six six, which is what I said was the wavelength of television sound, Q.E.D."

We saw the straw simultaneously and grabbed it.

"What's this three hundred million?"

"Metres per second. Speed of radio waves. Speed of all ether waves for the matter of that. It comes out at a hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second."

We were out of our depth again and quite prepared to accept his estimate.

"Of course," he went on, "when I say very high frequency that only means high compared with radio. Take the Home Service, say—that's only nine hundred and eight *kilocycles*, or less than one megacycle. On the other hand, the frequency of the shortest waves of visible light is seven hundred and fifty million megacycles, giving a wavelength of about a sixty-thousandth of an inch."

I looked at Figg. He looked glazed.

"Cosmic rays now." The little man was plodding on with the inexorability of a vote of thanks. "Cosmic rays. The frequency of cosmic is something more than a

hundred billion megacycles a second. It looks rather well written down in cycles," he said thoughtfully, and I felt reason totter as he produced a stump of pencil, licked it and wrote on the wallpaper as follows:

100,000,000,000,000,000 c/s.

He turned a knob and the screen went as blank as Figg's face.

"Will that be all, sir?" he asked.

"Certainly," said Figg. "Isn't it enough?"

So he wished us good day, took up his little bag, put on his little hat, stepped through the screen and got on his bicycle and pedalled away. We watched him until his bicycle had shrunk to a microcycle and Figg switched him off.



"Jackson's only a guide really but he suffers from an incurable love of the dramatic."

AT THE PLAY

King Henry VIII (STRATFORD)
The Platinum Set (SAVILLE)



THE production by Mr. TYRONE GUTHRIE of *King Henry VIII*, seen again this year at Stratford with numerous changes of cast, leaves me with mixed feelings. Of the great clerical clashes it makes better spectacle than sense, because Mr. ANDREW CRUICKSHANK's *Wolsey*, though impressive enough in the early parts of the play, seems to be scarcely touched by disgrace, so that the final speech to *Cromwell* is no more than a sober recitation; and *Cranmer* (the man who later thrust his offending hand into the flames!) is turned by Mr. GEOFFREY BAYLDON to a ninny. But though the Church is thus mishandled its chief victim is played with unforgettable poignancy: Miss GWEN FFRANGCON-DAVIES brings a lovely dignity to *Katherine of Aragon's* quiet spirit, and the death scene is exquisite. *Buckingham* is also beautifully taken by Mr. LEON QUARTERMAINE, the *Old Lady* is given a rare and racy character by Miss ROSALIND ATKINSON (who speaks prologue and epilogue as they should be spoken) and Miss BARRARA JEFFORD confirms the promise of her start at Stratford with a charming *Anne Bullen* that needs only a little more depth.

Nothing will convince me that Tudor monarchs ran upstairs, but, that aside, Mr. ANTHONY QUAYLE's *Henry* is full of resource, as well as being wonderfully faithful to Holbein. Mr. BRIAN BROCKMAN makes a good, surly *Cromwell*, Mr. MICHAEL

GWYNN a quaint but interesting *Norfolk* and Mr. RICHARD DARE's *Cardinal from Rome* is as sinister as ever. With the comics Mr. GUTHRIE both scores and slips up. The conversations between the *First Gentleman* and *Lord Sands*—capitally played by Mr. GEORGE ROSE and Mr. MICHAEL BATES—as they watch the royal pageantry are delightfully malicious. The ecstasy of the former at the sight of so many countesses could hardly be surpassed by the editor of the very shiniest weekly.

But when we come to the porters we are in for some sad knockabout that drowns the lines and reaches a peak of unfunniness in a quite inexcusable custard pie. Personally I believe it is a mistake to bring on a new scene before the old is fully off the stage, as Mr. GUTHRIE sometimes does—for instance, when the drunken *Henry* impinges on *Katherine* dying. Speed and contrast are gained at the cost of too much awkwardness. But at manoeuvring crowds Mr. GUTHRIE is a master, and, helped by Miss TANYA MOISEWITSCH, his production has much to please the eye.



False Start

Henry VIII—MR. ANTHONY QUAYLE; *Queen Katherine*—MISS GWEN FFRANGCON-DAVIES

out with the idea of a satire, and then somehow lost it in a muddle of values. The result is a poor evening, in which fresh players are now and then introduced more or less on the principles of ice hockey. There is a very good performance by Miss PATRICIA JESSEL as the unhappy mistress, Mr. OLAF POOLEY gives a diabolically clever sketch of a most unpleasant young man and Mr. PATRICK BARR leads a sound but wasted team. The glitter of big money is by no means reflected in the sets, which are a good deal shabbier than some I have seen in small rep.

Recommended

Christopher Fry's much-debated play in verse, *Venus Observed* (St. James's) should certainly be seen. In *Detective Story* (Princes) a faithful documentary picture of the American police system is handicapped by a poor plot, but is interesting enough. Sybil Thorndike in *Treasure Hunt* (Apollo) continues to please old and young.

ERIC KEOWN



Big Business

Russell Wain—MR. PATRICK BARR

The only acceptable human beings in *The Platinum Set*, the millionaire's mistress and his daughter's fiancé, never meet, and the rest of its Greenwich Americans are so wicked and sordid and silly that they quickly fail to make any impression at all. Mr. REGINALD DENHAM and Miss MARY ORR presumably started



THE POET CREEPS INTO A DARK HOLE WITH NO INTENTION OF EMERGING

In a niche of my contriving
Crawl I in and sleep all day;
No more struggling and striving,
I am nicely tucked away.

Call you may, and call, my masters,
But you cannot break my sleep;
You imagine you are pastors,
You are strangely like the sheep.

My thin bell shall tinkle-tinkle
Never more about the glen;
I am crannied like the winkle,
Buried from the sight of men.

Leave me here to curl and slumber,
Leave me in my narrow bed;
Centuries in countless number
Pass above my scatheless head.

This my lodgement brooks no budgement;
Perfect sanctuary is mine.
I shall wake when dawns the judgment
And the stars march out in line.

Till the final trumpets' blasting
Tears the rocky world in twain
I am safe for everlasting.
I shall not emerge again.

R. P. LISTER



THE PRISON WALL

WHEN I first took over my district in East Africa there wasn't a gaol at all. The prisoners lived on a hillside in a couple of mud and thatch huts surrounded by a few strands of barbed wire. They didn't go out to work much, as there weren't any warders to escort them, so for a lot of the time they just sat about, eating their heads off and hailing their friends passing by. They were a very happy set of Africans, and no one ever dreamed of walking out before his time was up.

But it wasn't a very good advertisement for sound government,

and after two years of correspondence three warders suddenly arrived. Some money came along too, for the construction of a gaol.

The money wasn't enough of course, so I decided to use it on making a high wall round the existing huts. Stone was expensive and not easy to come by, and no one knew how to burn bricks; so the wall was made of sun-dried mud blocks. It fell down once or twice during the building, and when it was finished it bulged a bit in places. But whitewashed and from a distance it looked pretty good and solid.

The prisoners didn't like the wall very much, but you couldn't blame them. They had got a lot of fun out of watching the girls going to market, and now they couldn't see them any longer. And because we now had warders there had to be some work.

So altogether the old happy atmosphere was rather spoilt, and I wasn't surprised when there was an escape. It was quite simple: someone pulled a few mud bricks out of the bottom of the wall and crawled out. But the wall couldn't stand it; it sagged badly and then all fell down.

After that I got some more money, enough this time to build a stone wall. I had to economize a bit on the foundations, but it looked fine when it was done. It was much too good for the shabby huts inside it, so I asked for funds to put up some proper cells.

Nothing happened; a year passed. The mud huts were in bad shape by now and the rains were coming on. I patched them up until they were passable and then sent off a telegram to the Public Works Department saying "Gaol cells destroyed by earthquake. Send five hundred pounds immediately."

The Public Works Department's headquarters were eight hundred miles away, and all telegrams had to go the first sixty miles by foot, so I did not expect a quick answer. I therefore went off on safari for a bit.

Ten days after I returned an answer came from the Director of Public Works, "TWO HUNDRED POUNDS AUTHORIZED CONSTRUCTION PRISON CELLS." It had come quite quickly, having been dispatched only six days before, and I was just finishing lunch when it arrived. At the same time a car drove up to the house.

We were well off the beaten track at Uluka and didn't get many visitors. This one was a stern-looking fellow whom I hadn't seen before.

"Come in," I said. "Have you had lunch?"

"Yes, thanks," he said. "I can't stop long. I'm just going through



on the main road and thought I would look in to see this earthquake damage to your gaol. I sent you some money for it the other day. I'm the Director of Public Works."

Well, that was a facer. The average district commissioner is good at improvisations, but it requires a lot of ingenuity to produce the results of an earthquake at short notice.

I made an excuse to get the D.P.W. into the house while I went down to my office, saying I would come back for him and take him to the gaol in fifteen minutes. Then I went down to have a word with the prisoners. Luckily they were all in for their lunch-time siesta.

Out came all the picks, axes, shovels and crowbars, and we all got down to it. It was a grand ten minutes.

The dust hadn't quite settled when I brought the D.P.W. along, and one happy convict was still shouting his tribal war song as he wielded an axe among the ruins, but I told the director the man was a lunatic and it was the only way we could keep him quiet. Anyway, the D.P.W. wasn't interested in prisoners, only in their buildings.

He had a good look round. "Yes," he said, "those old huts must have been pretty bad, but it's odd the wall wasn't touched. There's not a crack in it."

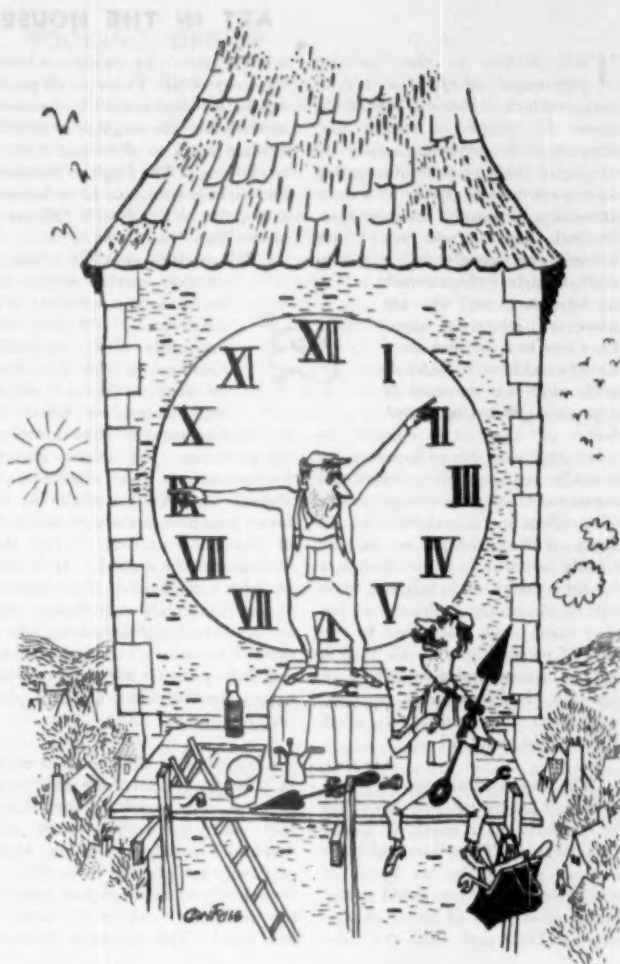
"Very well-built wall, that, sir," I told him. "It would take more than an earthquake to shift that."

The D.P.W. went away soon afterwards, and that night the rains broke hard. Luckily, I had enough tentage to cover the prisoners, but the wall fell down and I didn't feel like asking for more money to build another.

But we put up some nice cells out of the two hundred pounds. They are out in the open with a couple of strands of barbed wire round them. The prisoners can call to their friends again and are very happy. No one even thinks of trying to escape.

For Your Engagement Diary

"Young girl just left school. Tel.: 4454."—"Guernsey Evening Press"



"You are ten minutes slow again."

PEBBLES

FINGER these marble stones,
Tide-washed, surf-ground,
Sea-rubbed and rolled, and round
Polished as Time's old palm
That the pounding years have
worn
Callous to storm and calm.
Fast in their stony hearts
The furnace fires still fret.
Still shoot the flashing darts
Though the ore is set.

Unrest, upheaval, smoke,
Stress and release, and shock
All shaped to beauty lie
There for the seeing eye.
So is the word of the sage
Fashioned from fires in the heart,
Proved in the passion of learning,
Rounded and tempered with age,
Rubbed of its smart
Yet living, and leaping, and
burning.

ART IN THE HOUSE

THE decline in the "private patronage" of art is to-day an accepted fact. "Patrons" in the old sense, i.e. people of wealth who support and encourage artists by acquiring their productions, partly as a pleasure and partly as a duty attaching to wealth, are now rare. Instead, there is a new race of "art lovers," or people of generally civilized tastes (which include an interest in art) who are, however, relatively poor; they live in small houses or flatlets and have to make do with moderate incomes of depressed purchasing power.

Some of them are content to take their aesthetic pleasures communally in the public galleries and museums which offer a large variety of excellent special exhibitions. To many of them the process of personally acquiring a work of art is a fearful mystery, an indulgence to be left to imaginary millionaires; yet they come back fascinated to the idea of ownership with all that it implies of contemplative delight, of domestic interiors heightened in attraction. The question is, what can they do about it?

The first, modest, step may well be to find an inexpensive substitute for originals out of reach, in colour reproductions. These have had quite a vogue among the art lovers of small income, and one could represent a good deal of social change between 1889 and 1939 (to take

arbitrary dates) by, on the one hand, the array of late Victorian oil paintings in their massive gilt frames, and, on the other, the single print framed in plain wood, so often seen in modern homes, of Van Gogh's "Sunflowers," which seems to have become as popular as Landseer's "Monarch of the Glen" once used to be.

This is well enough: a reproduction serves, within its limits, as the reminder of a masterpiece. A few are extremely good, especially those taken from drawings, coloured or otherwise, which lend themselves better to mechanical process than involved oil paintings—you might glance, for instance, at those after Samuel Palmer and William Blake to be found just now in the entrance hall of the Tate Gallery. Yet the limitations are serious. It is not easy for a mechanical reproduction to be completely convincing, the artist's actual pigments being often difficult to translate through screens and into printing-ink, and to that extent the individual life of a picture may be lost.

We advance then to what may be called Stage Two of the art lover's progress—the search for something still inexpensive but more individually satisfying—which may profitably lead to the discovery or rediscovery of the "original print," the authentic work of the artist's own hand. This opens an historic

vista in which the woodcuts of Dürer, the etchings of Rembrandt come into view, but it also enables you to remain close to our own time or, if you prefer, to be strictly contemporary in selection. How exquisite, for example, are the colour lithographs of those late Impressionists Bonnard and Vuillard (some of them were exhibited recently at the Redfern Gallery in London), just as much the original work of these artists as their paintings, seeing that they devised the colour schemes and made the drawings from which the impression is taken. Instead, however, of a figure perhaps in the neighbourhood of a thousand pounds for a painting by one of them, you pay something like fifteen guineas for the print.

Though the question is ultimately one of artistic values it is necessary, in view of the economic string tied to appreciation in these days, to mention these sums of money. Let us add that for as little as three guineas (and up to ten) it is possible to obtain colour lithographs by living British artists of fame and promise—by Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell, William Scott, Claude Rogers, John Minton and many more who have found in the medium a fruitful form of expression. Here, anyway, is a starting point from which the art lover, turning patron, may begin to branch out, as cautiously as he may choose.

WILLIAM GAUNT



BACK ROOM JOYS

Being Destructive

DONT we all feel the attraction
Of destruction!
Give me a spade
And the results of my work, if any, are
delayed,
But give me a pair of secateurs
And just you watch what occurs!—
Shoots, twigs, boughs, whole branches—
Till the face of the woman at the window
blanches,
"My apple tree! My pears!"
Give me the shears,

Give me the axe
And big great mordant satisfying whacks!

Is mending
Comparable with the lovely rending
Of linen in the too-far-gone sheet?
Is sewing
Half so satisfactory as throwing
The beastly thing away, repairing
As tearing?
Where are those scissors,
Mrs?

JUSTIN RICHARDSON

BOOKING OFFICE

Problems of the Spirit

IT is the most characteristic feature of the novel of these times that its focal point is to be found in an intrinsic personal problem, set against a background of social, philosophical or religious import, rather than in the conflict of separate personalities or the caprices of fortune. This is well illustrated by four novels that come into chance conjunction from four different countries—England, Ireland, France and America—and as unlike, otherwise, in manner as in milieu.

The French book, it is true, is not, precisely speaking, contemporary. *Jean Barois* was written before the first world war, a good while, that is, before M. Roger Martin du Gard had won fame and a Nobel Prize with "*Les Thibaults*"; and the beginnings of its story reach back to the eighteen-seventies. But that it should have been translated just now (and very well translated by Mr. Stuart Gilbert) is significant. Though unfashionably envisaged in terms of logic rather than of emotion its theme is very relevant to what is often called the modern predicament. It is the spiritual journey of a Frenchman from the orthodoxy of his boyhood, through the modernist compromise, to the scientific rationalism and ethical liberalism which were the hope of so many fine minds of the later nineteenth century (and of which he becomes the champion and publicist) and back at last, after much strain and stress, to the point of his departure. And the background here is the whole conflict of the Republic itself, with the great Dreyfus drama at its centre. Set forth mainly in the form of dialogue, with "stage directions" as minute and precise as Shaw's and vividly etched portraits of the many characters, *Jean Barois* is an absorbing and impressive work which would place M. Martin du Gard among the novelists that count, even though he had not written "*Les Thibaults*."

The other books are not of such stature, but each has its qualities. The Batchelors, of *The Lost Traveller*, are a Roman Catholic family—father, mother and only daughter. While, however, their religion is important to the theme its essence is in the conception of human loneliness expressed in the words of St. Augustine, which Miss Antonia White has taken for an epigraph, "In the sojourning of this carnal life each man carries his own heart, and every heart is closed to every other heart." Close-bound as they are by natural relationship Claude and Isabel and Clara live their private and solitary lives not without mutual affection, at any rate between father and daughter, but ill at ease with one another, unjust to one another in the fundamental impossibility of mutual understanding. Here is a theme, perhaps the theme, of human tragedy, which in the end is only partially, and one feels precariously, resolved: nevertheless there is no lack of incidental comedy—in, for instance, the romantic snobbery of Isabel, an exile in West Kensington, and in Clara's schoolgirl friendships. Perhaps, indeed, the schoolgirl atmosphere is something too pervasive, for

Clara is the central figure and only seventeen when we leave her. But Miss White is a deft if sometimes rather conventional narrator.

School and Catholicism make the atmosphere also of *The Fire in the Dust*; but both in a cruder form. The scene is a small Irish town, where religion, it seems, is liable to be a narrow puritanism engendering prurience or fanaticism. Hither come the Goldenes, Catholics themselves and partially Irish, but with the sophistications and freedoms of a wider world. This is Stevie Golden's tragedy as seen through the eyes of the one boy, or rather of the man remembering that boy, who, among the hooligans of the seminary, has some dim inkling of his perplexities. Mr. Francis MacManus tells his story, in which there is plenty of incident, with that imaginative trenchancy which is the Irish prerogative.

It is not exactly a spiritual problem but a sense of inferiority in a world of competent women which impels William Harmon, the New York lawyer, to join a mission to reorganize a South American state; but it is a personal problem none the less, and in the tough adventures assigned to him by Mr. David Davidson in *The Hour of Truth* he apparently finds its solution.

FRANCIS BICKLEY

Edgeworths of Edgeworthstown

Richard Lovell Edgeworth, an Irish gentleman who combined the uxoriousness of the Arabian Nights with the morality of Sandford and Merton, was fortunate in having, by the first of his four wives, a singularly charming, gifted, capable and virtuous daughter. Although *Maria Edgeworth* was bracketed equal, by



"Women! Why will they put flowers all over the place?"

Byron, with Madame de Stael as London's "exhibitions of 1813," the poet added that her work "excited no feelings and left no love." While Scott, who owed her the inspiration that launched "Waverley," warned her against setting her didactic traps so clumsily that "the rats smelt the hand of the rat-catcher." Her books were first and foremost social services; and Miss Isabel C. Clarke has rightly given them a subordinate place in a fascinating domestic chronicle of eighty-one well-spent years. Valuable sidelights on the Abbé Edgeworth, Louis XVI's confessor on the scaffold, show the Edgeworth moral self-consciousness transmuted into heroic sanctity.

H. P. E.

Rainbow's End

If Mr. Bernard Berenson, impenitent Traditionalist and Classicist, gives us (in *Aesthetics and History*) no very coherent statement, and therefore no consistent proofs, of his aesthetico-historical theses, he does offer something which may well be more profoundly valuable. He conveys in brilliant flashes something of the passion of the true amateur and incredibly learned professional assayer of the visual arts that has inspired and informed his lifelong quest. This passion, he claims, is a mystical experience, its origin a flash of intuition with the force of a revelation. He does also, here explicitly and there by inference, state his fundamental humanist philosophy: Religion is well enough, provided it does not invite us to consider this world a vale of tears; but it is Art, universally understood and accepted, which will bring our civilization to a perfect flowering. A not ignoble dream, certainly, on which he builds a lovely arch of fantasy—but lacking a keystone, perhaps.

J. P. T.



Stone in a Pool

Mr. Charles Jackson, author of "The Lost Weekend," has a good eye for the weaknesses of human nature, especially in America. *The Outer Edges* describes how a sordid sex crime, suitable for the delectation of the "tabloid" public, strikes echoes from the minds of Westchester residents in the higher income brackets. It is an efficient example of the "montage" novel, in which the author cuts quickly from one set of characters to another. This method gives readability and pace, though also a lack of resonance. The swift efficiency of the narrative does not fit the savage, Faulkneresque theme, and the satire does not whiplash the reader but merely gives him a feeling of superiority to the people described. However, it is very expertly confected, and though it neither extends the powers of the author nor explores the implications of the subject it is worth reading and more enjoyable than it ought to be. The quickness of the pen deceives the heart.

R. G. G. P.

"Dearest Babs"

The connecting links and running commentaries supplied by Mr. Elliott Roosevelt for the second volume of the great President's personal correspondence amount to a fairly complete history of the period covered—1905-1928. This is the more convenient, as *The Roosevelt Letters* themselves convey little except the writer's unfailing affectionate regard for all the members of his family, above all for the wife to whom they are mainly directed. It was in these years that he had to face the psychological shock of disastrous illness, and in these years also that he was learning statesmanship under Woodrow Wilson and Josephus Daniels, yet except in an occasional diary extract there is little to indicate the hammering he was undergoing. On the other hand his perpetually recurring "loads of love" and "kiss the chicks" have a certain piquancy when realized as coming from such a man amid the stresses of the first world war and the clamour of American politics.

C. C. P.

Books Reviewed Above

- Jean Barois, Roger Martin du Gard. Translated by Stuart Gilbert. (The Bodley Head, 12/6)
The Lost Traveller. Antonia White. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 10/6)
The Fire in the Dust. Francis MacManus. (Cape, 9/6)
The Hour of Truth. David Davidson. (Falcon Press, 9/6)
Maria Edgeworth: Her family and friends. Isabel C. Clarke. (Hutchinson, 18/-)
Aesthetics and History. Bernard Berenson. (Constable, 15/-)
The Outer Edges. Charles Jackson. (Peter Nevill, 8/6)
The Roosevelt Letters, II: 1905-1928. Edited by Elliott Roosevelt. (Harrap, 21/-)

Other Recommended Books

- Animal Facts and Fallacies*. Osmond P. Breland. (Faber, 10/6) A classified, indexed, humorously illustrated collection of odd facts about animals, no less entertaining to read than useful in settling arguments.
Cats Prowl at Night. A. A. Fair. (Robert Hale, 8/6) Swift and aggressively confusing American whodunit. What happens may be obscure, but it is fun while it is happening.

MY PLAY

I AM sorry to disappoint my public, but I have definitely decided not, after all, to write a play. Great preparations were made. I had bought a two-colour ribbon for my typewriter, so that people could distinguish the stage directions from the conversation. I had laid in a ream of best quarto paper, and an expensive and elegant stiff-covered file to preserve the play's freshness on its travels from producer to producer.

Nothing remained to be done except to invent a plot and a few characters and a couple of hundred pages of breezy dialogue. And then the blow fell. In the gossip column of an evening newspaper I read a tale that made my blood curdle. It was about a distinguished playwright and his financial embarrassments. By bad luck his first play, written many years ago, had been a success, and the same ill fortune had dogged him ever since.

"If I make £30,000 a year," he was quoted as saying, "the Income Tax people take £25,500, leaving me £4,500 to spend. But if I make only £10,000 they take only £6,500, which leaves me £3,500 to spend."

Apparently, like so many of us, the playwright found it very difficult to spend more than £3,500 a year, but unfortunately nothing would persuade the Chancellor of the Exchequer to take more than £25,500 out of the £30,000 which the wretched man found himself unable to help earning if he worked the whole year.

So he makes the best of a bad job and works only four months every year, devoting the other eight months to pottering about his garden. One's heart bleeds for him as he hoes sadly among his geraniums or sprinkles fertilizer over his tomatoes, counting the hours, the days, the weeks, the months, until he can once again take the cover off his neglected typewriter.

All the time, too, he is a prey to gnawing anxiety. During the four months' work he has limited himself strictly to a moderate output each day, but all authors know how difficult it is to make only £10,000



"... And in this ever-recurring dream I stand out there in front telling customers it's no worse than any other film."

in four whole months, with the utmost care. A novel which you had hoped would bring in only about £1,000 gets itself made into a film, and a play whose London run seemed safe to net only £2,000 is unexpectedly successful on tour. Then there are repertory companies and American rights and television rights to be guarded against.

If you have friends among the dramatic critics something can no doubt be done in the way of getting them to give bad notices, but even bad notices cannot be relied upon to keep people away. Short of burning down the theatre after the play has netted the scheduled profit it is very difficult to prevent too much money accumulating.

So I have abandoned my play

on the grounds that the whole thing is too risky. Friends who have read my nineteen previous plays are inclined to think that the danger of any play of mine making more than £10,000 in a single year is not very great, but friends are notoriously bad judges of one's work. And even £10,000 would be too much in the current year, because I have already had a guinea from the *Toddler's Times* for a short story and three-and-six from the *Drysaltery Gazette* for a bit of light verse. With £1 4s. 6d. already in the sock my play might easily take me over the edge and force me, like the other unfortunate playwright, to do eight months' gardening a year. And I loathe gardening.

D. H. BARBER

ON THE MAT

"I HEAR," began the head of the Information Department of the Ministry for Quadrilateral Affairs coldly, "that someone has removed the carpet, or mat, from under Mandrill's table and placed it under yours."

This rather surprised me. I had been expecting a slight *démarche* on a trifling error on the difference between *détente* and *démenti* which had bewildered and hurt the news agencies the day before. But this mat business was serious.

"As I sit nearest the draught," I replied, "and as the carpet itself is patched, frayed, and held together by strips of adhesive tape I did not think..."

"You have not been here long enough to appreciate the full seriousness of what you have done," continued the head. "But you have, in effect, court-martialled Mandrill and reduced him to the ranks. You should know that that small square of carpet is the only outward sign that Mandrill is of a rank which, for one thing, is allowed to have a table of its own in the canteen." The head put his feet on the table. "Mandrill joined this department some twelve years ago. He was given a table such as you yourself now possess—a plain board on trestles, and equally far away from the fire. In the course of time and by methods of his own

(we could not, for instance, understand for a long time his amazing popularity with the higher-class weeklies until we found that he had a brother-in-law in the department for Very-Far-Eastern Affairs upstairs) he acquired, successively, a table with two drawers; a table with two drawers with brass handles; and a table with two drawers with brass handles and a chair with a back to it. Don't quote me on this, but some of us think that Mandrill comes in early once a week to polish these handles. But I've nothing really firm on that.

"In two years' time he will hand that carpet to McAssar, who is, so to speak, panting behind him, and have a rug with fringes, and a chair beside his own so that he can entertain a correspondent *tête-à-tête* instead of mixing it with the common herd."

"I do not see..." I began.

"Let me put it to you another way," broke in the head.

"A stranger coming along this corridor, and surviving the constant barrage of burst pingpong balls and rolled up secret telegrams that is laid down by Inland Waterways and ourselves, would never guess that I am senior to Baldrick, chief of Waterways, by three years. But the experienced eye, like Establishments bent on cutting, would

notice that whereas he has only two telephones on his table I have three—one red, as you see, and connected direct with the Assistant Deputy Under-Parliamentary Secretary himself—at least I was told so, because we've never actually spoken. It rang once, but a cleaner took the message. However, I can usually just throw my hat over it from the door when I enter the room, so I suppose it's not altogether wasted." The head became almost human for a moment.

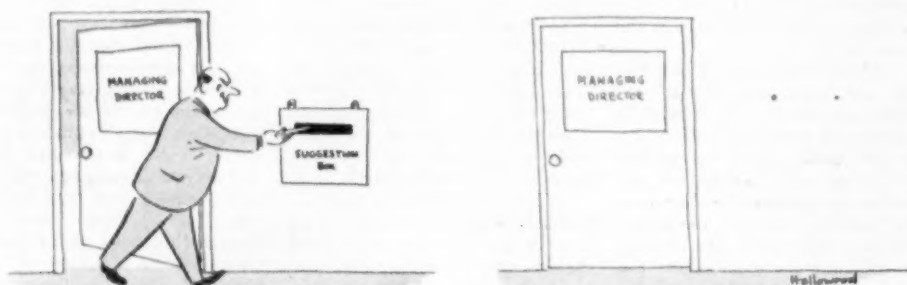
"I know there's nothing more discomposing than suddenly to fall backwards off a chair when you are trying to hold up the balance of trilateral trade. But your statement on the total exports to the Chaldees last Wednesday caused a good deal of comment; so who knows? Perhaps in twelve years..."

"Now—this mat. Send Mandrill a curt little minute saying that you thought it was for wiping the department's feet on. He might buy a new one after that."

Ship's Galley

Ah, when the waves have risen and propose
Your pride's abasement in abandoned throes,
Restless is the action of the ocean
With warm, rich odours seconding the motion.

W. K. HOLMES



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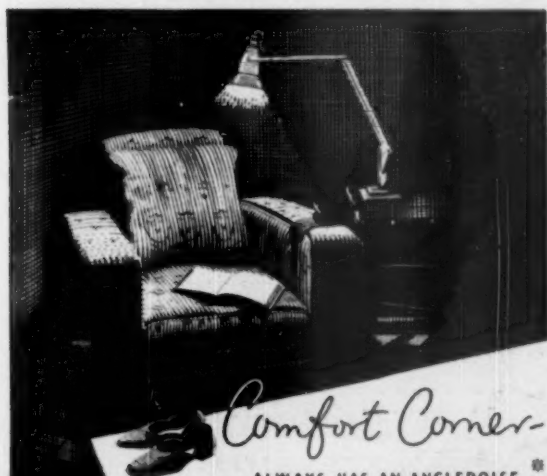


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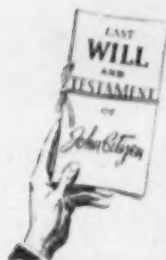
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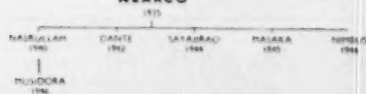
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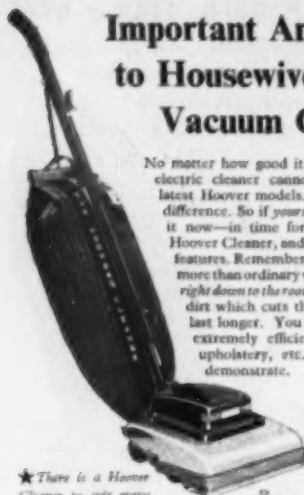
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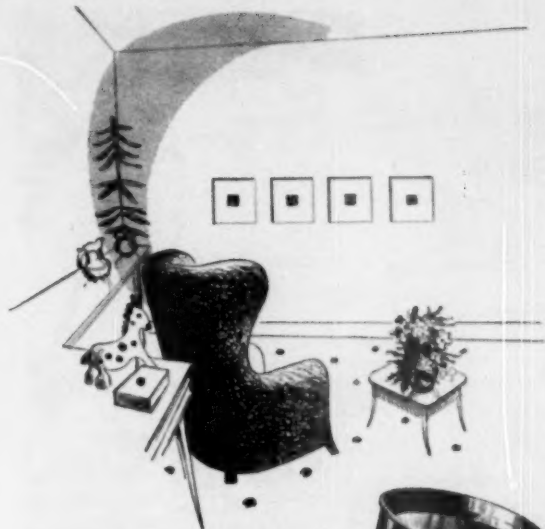
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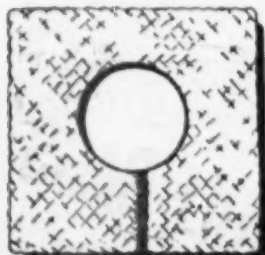
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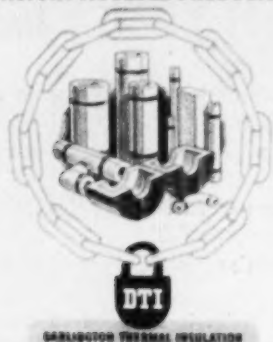
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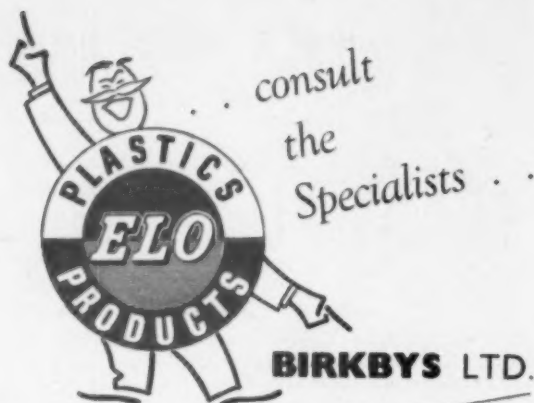
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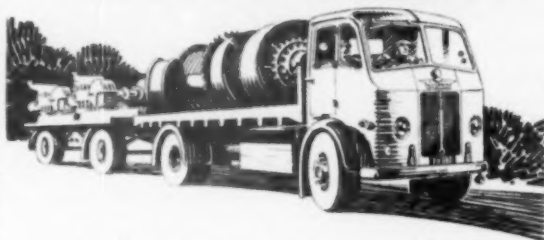


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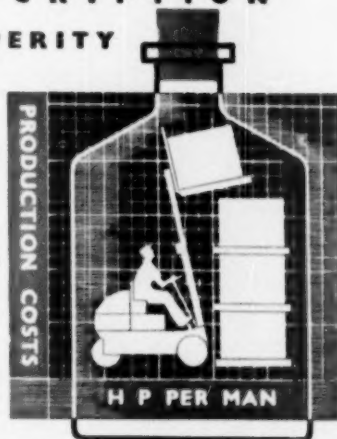
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